

FEAR

HERE ARE TALES THAT WILL USHER YOU INTO

THE HAUNT OF



NO. 26
AUGUST

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10¢

FEAR[®]

FEATURING...



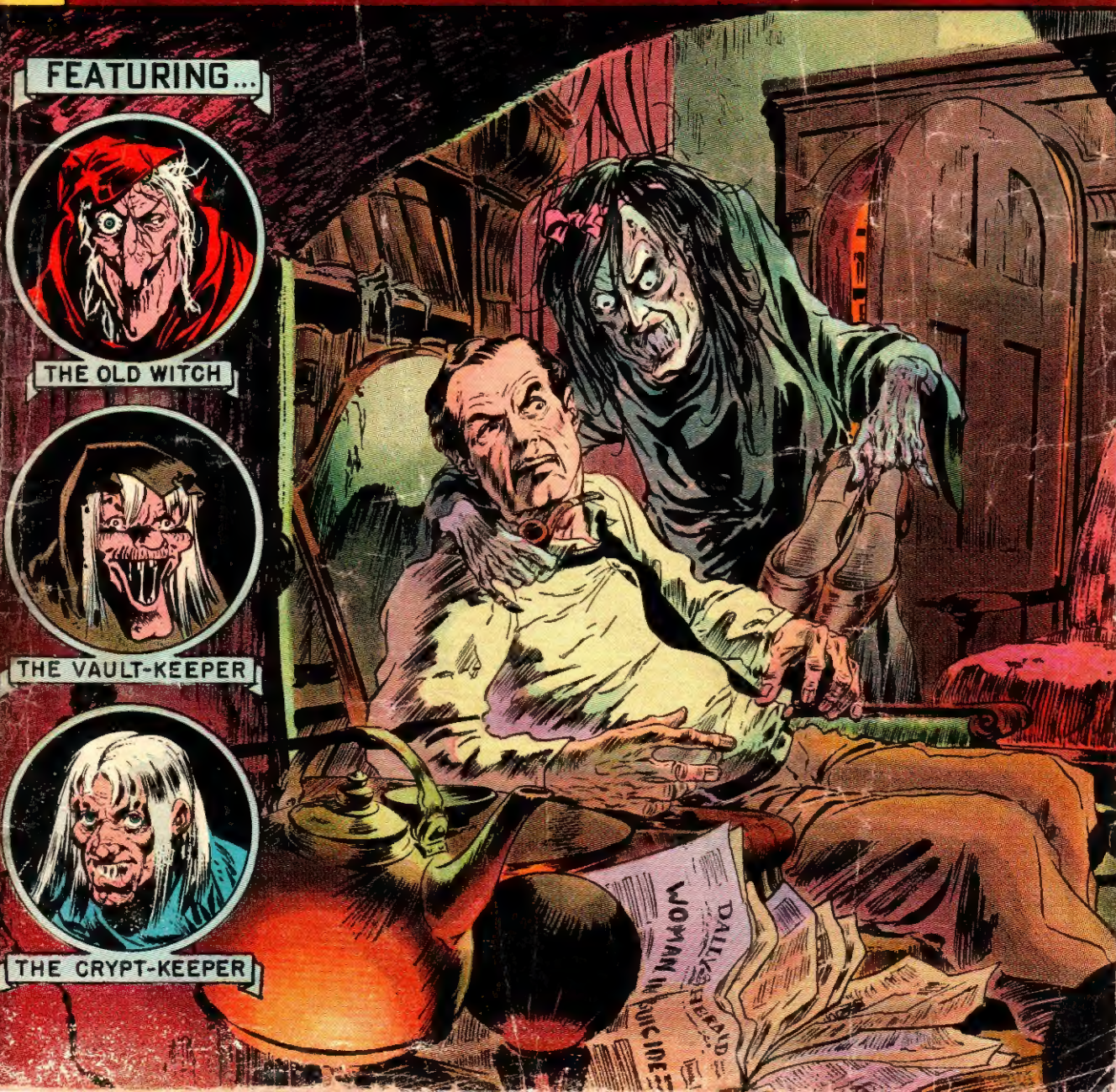
THE OLD WITCH



THE VAULT-KEEPER



THE CRYPT-KEEPER



ARE YOU A RED DUPE?

IN THE TOWN OF GAZOOSKY IN THE HEART OF SOVIET RUSSIA, YOUNG MELVIN BLIZUNKEN - SKOVITCHSKY PUBLISHED A **COMIC MAGAZINE...**



...SO THEY CAME AND **SMASHED** HIS FOUR-COLOR PRESS...



...AND **HUNG POOR MELVIN** THE NEXT MORNING!



- HERE IN AMERICA, WE CAN **STILL** PUBLISH COMIC MAGAZINES, NEWSPAPERS, SLICKS, BOOKS AND THE BIBLE. WE DON'T **HAVE** TO SEND THEM TO A CENSOR FIRST. NOT **YET...**
- BUT THERE ARE SOME PEOPLE IN AMERICA WHO WOULD **LIKE** TO CENSOR... WHO WOULD **LIKE** TO SUPPRESS COMICS. IT ISN'T THAT THEY DON'T LIKE COMICS FOR **THEM!** THEY DON'T LIKE THEM FOR **YOU!**
- THESE PEOPLE SAY THAT **COMIC BOOKS** AREN'T AS GOOD FOR CHILDREN AS **NO** COMIC BOOKS, OR SOMETHING LIKE THAT. SOME OF THESE PEOPLE ARE NO-GOODS. SOME ARE DO-GOODERS. SOME ARE WELL-MEANING. AND SOME ARE JUST PLAIN MEAN.
- BUT WE ARE CONCERNED WITH AN AMAZING REVELATION. AFTER MUCH SEARCHING OF NEWSPAPER FILES, WE'VE MADE AN ASTOUNDING DISCOVERY:

THE GROUP MOST ANXIOUS TO DESTROY COMICS ARE THE COMMUNISTS!

- WE'RE SERIOUS! NO KIDDIN'! **HERE! READ THIS:**

THE [COMMUNIST] "DAILY WORKER" OF JULY 13, 1953 BITTERLY ATTACKED THE ROLE OF:

"...SO-CALLED 'COMICS' IN BRUTALIZING AMERICAN YOUTH, THE BETTER TO PREPARE THEM FOR MILITARY SERVICE IN IMPLEMENTING OUR GOVERNMENT'S AIMS OF WORLD DOMINATION, AND TO ACCEPT THE ATROCITIES NOW BEING PERPETRATED BY AMERICAN SOLDIERS AND AIRMEN IN KOREA UNDER THE FLAG OF THE UNITED NATIONS."

THIS ARTICLE ALSO QUOTED **GERSHON LEGMAN** (WHO CLAIMS TO BE A GHOST WRITER FOR **DR. FREDERICK WERTHAM**, THE AUTHOR OF A RECENT SMEAR AGAINST COMICS PUBLISHED IN "THE LADIES HOME JOURNAL"). THIS SAME **G. LEGMAN**, IN ISSUE #3 OF "NEUROTICA," PUBLISHED IN AUTUMN 1948, WILDLY CONDEMNED COMICS, ALTHOUGH ADMITTING THAT:

"THE CHILD'S NATURAL CHARACTER... MUST BE DISTORTED TO FIT CIVILIZATION... FANTASY VIOLENCE WILL PARALYZE HIS RESISTANCE, DIVERT HIS AGGRESSION TO UNREAL ENEMIES AND FRUSTRATIONS, AND IN THIS WAY PREVENT HIM FROM REBELLING AGAINST PARENTS AND TEACHERS... THIS WILL SIPHON OFF HIS RESISTANCE AGAINST SOCIETY, AND **PREVENT REVOLUTION.**"

- SO THE **NEXT** TIME SOME JOKER GETS UP AT A P.T.A. MEETING, OR STARTS JABBERING ABOUT THE "NAUGHTY COMIC BOOKS" AT YOUR LOCAL CANDY STORE, GIVE HIM THE **ONCE-OVER**. WE'RE NOT SAYING HE **IS** A COMMUNIST! HE MAY BE INNOCENT OF THE WHOLE THING! HE MAY BE A **DUPE!** HE MAY NOT EVEN **READ** THE "DAILY WORKER"! IT'S JUST THAT HE'S **SWALLOWED THE RED BAIT... HOOK, LINE, AND SINKER!**

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THE WITCH'S CAULDRON!

HEE, HEE! WELCOME TO THE HAUNT OF FEAR, FIENDS. ENTER FOR THE ENTREE, SERVED UP BY YOUR CACKLING GREEPS COOK, THE OLD WITCH. THE FIRE UNDER MY PEW POT IS LIT... (I POURED A LITTLE ALCOHOL ON IT)... AND I HOPE YOU'RE READY TO BEGIN MASTICATING ANOTHER MORSEL OF MY MORBID MENU. THIS REVOLTING REPAST IS A FAVORITE FOUL FARE OF MINE... A MURDEROUS MEAL TOPPED OFF WITH A DERANGED DESSERT. I CALL THIS SLIME-STORY SLOP SERVING:

MARRIAGE VOW



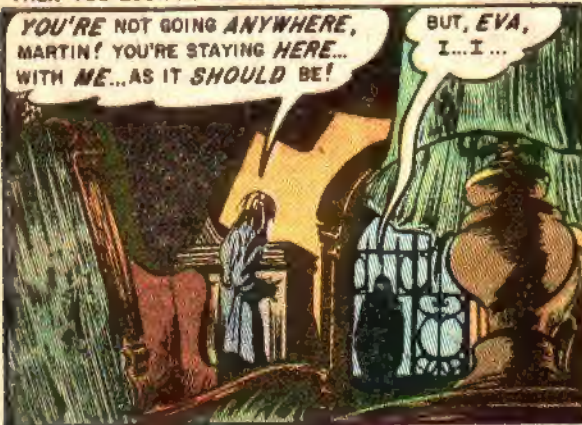
"TILL DEATH DO US PART!" THOSE WORDS ARE ALWAYS RINGING IN YOUR MIND, AREN'T THEY, MARTIN SAUNDERS? THE SOLEMN WORDS OF THE WEDDING CEREMONY, NOT TO BE LIGHTLY OR CARELESSLY THROWN ASIDE. BUT LIKE *ANY* MARRIED MAN, YOU'D LIKE A BIT OF *FREEDOM* NOW AND THEN, *WOULDN'T* YOU? AN EVENING AWAY FROM THE HEARTH. SO YOU STEAL TO THE CLOSET, FURTIVELY SLIP INTO YOUR COAT, AND SILENTLY TIP-TOE TO THE FRONT DOOR... ONLY TO HEAR HER SHRILL VOICE...

AND JUST *WHERE* DO YOU THINK *YOU'RE* GOING...?

WHY...UH...JUST OUT FOR A BREATH OF AIR, EVA...



YOU LOOK AROUND... AT THE DUST-LADEN TABLES... THE COB-WEBBED LAMPS... THE MILDEWED FURNITURE, AND THEN YOU LOOK AT HER... AT EVA... AT YOUR DARLING WIFE.



YOU'RE NOT GOING ANYWHERE, MARTIN! YOU'RE STAYING HERE... WITH ME... AS IT SHOULD BE!

BUT, EVA, I... I...

AND SO, LIKE THE PROVERBIAL MEN-PECKED HUSBAND, YOU OBEY MEEKLY... TAKING OFF YOUR COAT ONCE MORE... HANGING IT BACK UP IN THE CLOSET... AND COMING INTO THE FOUL-SMELLING MUSTY LIVING ROOM, TO SIT ONCE AGAIN THROUGH ANOTHER EVENING OF HORROR IN STONE SILENT RESIGNATION...



DON'T YOU LIKE MY COMPANY, MARTIN? DON'T YOU LOVE THESE COZY EVENINGS WE SPEND TOGETHER... JUST YOU AND ME... ALONE?

YOU SIT STIFFLY, IN QUIET REVULSION, TRYING TO IGNORE HER MOCKERY, BUT YOU JUMP LIKE A FRIGHTENED RABBIT AS SHE SCREAMS...



WELL?

UH... YES, DEAR! I LOVE TO SPEND THESE... CHOKE... THESE EVENINGS WITH YOU!

HOW YOU LIE, MARTIN! YOU KNOW YOU'RE FIGHTING OFF THE NAUSEA THAT SWEEPS OVER YOU FROM THE CONTEMPT AND LOATHING YOU HAVE FOR THIS WOMAN YOU MARRIED ONLY A FEW SHORT YEARS AGO. SHE NEVER ATTEMPTS TO 'PRETTY UP' FOR YOU. SHE ALWAYS LOOKS HER WORST FOR YOU... HER VERY WORST...



NOW TELL ME THAT YOU STILL LOVE ME, HONEY! SAY IT! SAY IT!

CAN YOU SAY IT, MARTIN? CAN YOU BRING YOURSELF TO MURMUR THOSE SWEET WORDS TO THIS DISGUSTING CREATURE WHOSE VERY APPEARANCE WOULD MAKE ANY NORMAL MAN BE SICK ON THE FLOOR? CAN YOU, MARTIN? OF COURSE YOU CAN! YOU MUST!



I... I... CHOKER... I STILL LOVE YOU, EVA... GAG...

YOU HAVE TO VOMIT IT OUT, DON'T YOU, MARTIN? AND YOU KNOW WHAT'S COMING NEXT, TOO. IT'S THE RITUAL. IT HAPPENS EVERY NIGHT. SHE RUBS YOUR NOSE IN IT AND YOU SPINELESSLY TAKE IT...



AND I'M A VISION OF LOVELINESS! TELL ME THAT! SAY IT...

YOU'RE... YOU'RE A VISION OF... UH... LOVELINESS, EVA!

YOU'RE A PITIFUL FIGURE, MARTIN SAUNDERS. NO DECENT, SELF-RESPECTING HUMAN BEING WOULD LIVE WITH THIS CREATURE FOR ONE INSTANT. YET YOU SWALLOW YOUR PRIDE AND STAY... DAY AFTER DAY. YOU MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO LEAVE HER... RUN AWAY... FREE YOURSELF. WHY, MARTIN? WHAT HOLD DOES SHE HAVE ON YOU?...



YOU SAY THE NICEST THINGS, MARTIN, DARLING! NOW... KISS ME! CHOKER...

DOES SHE HAVE MONEY, MARTIN? DOES THAT EXPLAIN IT? A MAN WILL PUT UP WITH A LOT TO ENJOY GOLDEN LUXURIES. WOULD IT BE WORTH A MILLION DOLLARS TO YOU TO KISS THOSE PUFFED LIPS WITH NO TRACE OF LIPSTICK TO HIDE THEIR SICKENING GREY BLOTCHINESS? TWO MILLION?



I'M WAITING, MARTIN!

Y-YES, DEAR! GAGGG...

NO, MARTIN! IT ISN'T MONEY! YOU KNOW THAT. YOU'D DITCH THE MILLIONS TONIGHT... THIS MINUTE... AND CRAWL A THOUSAND MILES ON YOUR HANDS AND KNEES OVER BROKEN GLASS IF YOU COULD GET AWAY FROM HER. BUT YOU CAN'T...



MMMM! THAT'S NICE, DEAR!

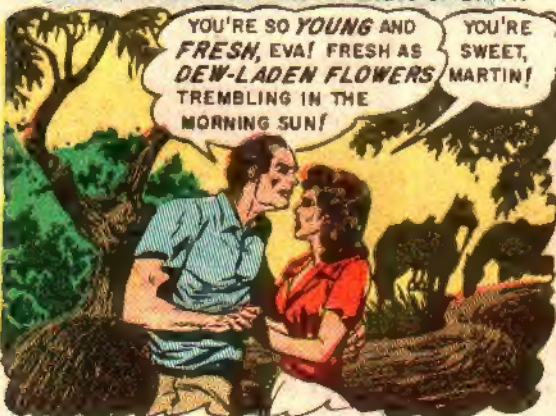
NO ESCAPE! TRAPPED! TILL DEATH DO US PART...

YES, MARTIN. THOSE WORDS ENSNARE YOU LIKE A STEEL VISE. YOU'RE FORCED TO SWALLOW EVERY BITTER DROP OF THIS DOMESTIC SWILL AND LIVE ON IN A KIND OF PURGATORY WITH THIS FILTHY FEMALE WHO IS YOUR WEDDED WIFE...



IF ONLY ALL THIS HADN'T HAPPENED! IF ONLY SHE WERE STILL THE SAME LOVELY GIRL I FIRST MET AND...

THERE'S ONE ESCAPE, ISN'T THERE, MARTIN? YOU CAN ESCAPE INTO THE MEMORIES OF YOUR PAST, CAN'T YOU? YOU CAN RELIVE THOSE MOMENTS WHEN YOU FIRST KNEW THE RIPENESS OF EVA...



YOU'RE SO YOUNG AND FRESH, EVA! FRESH AS DEW-LADEN FLOWERS TREMBLING IN THE MORNING SUN!

YOU'RE SWEET, MARTIN!

YES, MARTIN. REMEMBER ENCHANTING YOUNG EVA SEVEN YEARS AGO... ENCHANTING FOR BOTH HER BEAUTY AND HER WEALTH. SHE FELL FOR YOUR SMOOTH LINES, DIDN'T SHE? SHE FELL FOR YOUR HUSKY MURMURS OF LOVE... YOUR PRACTICED CHARM...



OH, DARLING, I DO LOVE YOU! I LOVE YOU MORE THAN ANYTHING ON THIS EARTH!

AND I LOVE YOU MORE THAN LIFE, EVA... MORE THAN LIFE ITSELF...

REMEMBER THE WEDDING, MARTIN... AND ALL OF EVA'S RICH FRIENDS? REMEMBER THE MINISTER'S WORDS...

DO YOU, MARTIN SAUNDERS, TAKE THIS WOMAN...?

THIS WOMAN... AND HER MONEY...

I DO!



IT WAS YOUR DREAM COME TRUE, WASN'T IT, MARTIN? ALL OF YOUR WILDEST HOPES AND SCHEMES HAD PANNED OUT. AFTER THE HONEYMOON, YOU SET UP HOUSEKEEPING IN EVA'S TOWN HOUSE, OFF CENTRAL PARK. AND YOU HAD SUCH PERPLEXING PROBLEMS.

MORNIN', MR. SAUNDERS!

GOING FOR A RIDE, GEORGE! LET'S SEE... THE JAGUAR... OR THE CADDY? CAN'T DECIDE!



AND EVA HERSELF WASN'T SO HARD TO TAKE BACK THEN IN THE BEGINNING, WAS SHE MARTIN? SHE WAS WARM AND LOVELY... ALL WOMAN... AND EAGER TO PROVE IT TO YOU... OVER AND OVER AGAIN...

YOU LOOK *TIRED*, DARLING! COME TO *BED*!

EVA... YOU ENTRANCING WITCH...



YES, MARTIN! THAT WAS EVA THEN! BUT NOW? LISTEN TO HER... RUDELY BURSTING YOUR DREAM-BUBBLE OF THE PASSION-ATE PAST...

I SAID 'YOUR SUPPER'S READY!' COME AND *EAT* IT! WHAT ARE YOU *THINKING* ABOUT?

N-NOTHING, EVA! NOTHING...



SUPPER, MARTIN SHE CALLS THE ABOMINABLE STEW OF STALE, HALF-ROTTED MEATS SHE SERVES YOU SUPPER. WHY IT'S FOOD A PIG WOULD TURN AWAY FROM, NAUSEATED...

YOU SHAKE YOUR HEAD, FIGHTING DOWN THE GORGE THAT RISES IN YOUR THROAT. AND YOU SIT DOWN TO EAT.

SHE DOESN'T EAT WITH YOU, DOES SHE, MARTIN? SHE JUST SITS THERE... OPPOSITE YOU... WATCHING... WATCHING...

MMMMPH! ARE YOU CRITI-GIZING MY COOKING?

FINISH EVERY DROP, DEAR! WE MUST KEEP YOU *STRONG* AND *HEALTHY*! AND DON'T SCRAPE THE *MOLD* FROM THE BREAD! *TRY IT!* IT GIVES IT *TASTE*...

Y-YES, EVA...



I... I'M NOT *HUNGRY* ANYMORE, EVA!

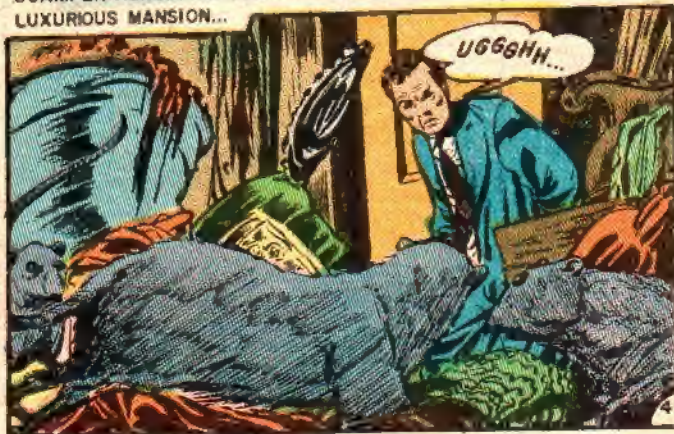
WHY YOU'VE *SCARCELY* EATEN ENOUGH TO STAY *ALIVE*, MARTIN! C'MON! *FINISH UP!*



SO YOU GO ON, MARTIN SAUNDERS... LIVING IN A HOUSE PERMEATED WITH THE FOUL FETID ODOR OF ROT AND DECAY... DANK AND DAMP AND UN-CLEANED FOR SO LONG...

YOU GO ON LIVING IN A HOUSE THAT EVEN A "TOBACCO ROAD FAMILY" WOULD SPURN IN DISGUST... WATCHING THE RATS SCAMPER ACROSS THE LITTER-STREWN FLOORS OF THIS ONCE LUXURIOUS MANSION...

THAT *SMELL*... GAGG... THAT *AWFUL STENCH!*



UGGHHH...

AND YOUR FRIENDS, MARTIN. EVA'S FRIENDS. THEY'VE ALL CEASED TO CALL, HAVEN'T THEY? EVA MADE SURE OF THAT. SHE'S CUT YOU OFF WITH ALL SOCIAL INTER-COURSE WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD. YOUR ONCE-STATELY BROWNSTONE HOUSE IS THE ABODE OF TWO VIRTUAL HERMITS, NOW... A CAVE IN THE HEART OF THE BIG CITY...



AND YET YOU DON'T LEAVE HER, MARTIN. WHY? WHY? IN THE MIRROR, YOU'RE STILL YOUNG, HANDSOME, MAGNETIC. YOU COULD EASILY FIND YOURSELF ANOTHER WOMAN... MARRY AGAIN... LIVE HAPPILY. AND YET YOU DON'T LEAVE HER. WHY?...



WHY DO THOSE WORDS CHAIN YOU, MARTIN? AREN'T THEY YOUR ANSWER? DON'T YOU SEE? THEY COULD FREE YOU. DEATH! WHY DON'T YOU KILL HER, MARTIN?...



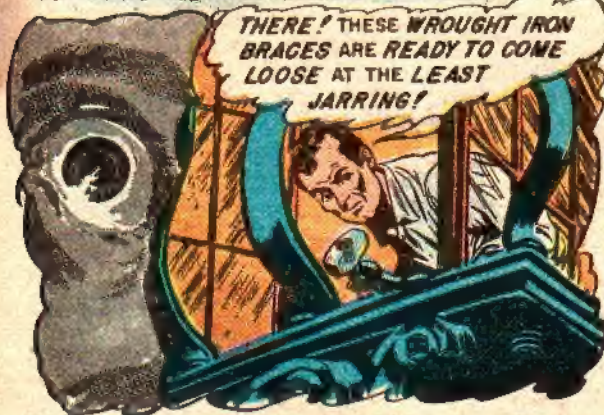
ARE YOU A COWARD, MARTIN? ARE YOU AFRAID TO TRY? NO, THAT ISN'T IT. THINK BACK... BACK TO FIVE YEARS AGO. YOU'D BEEN MARRIED A YEAR, AND EVA HAD WORN OFF. ONLY HER MONEY WAS IMPORTANT TO YOU THEN...



REMEMBER THE OLD BALCONY, MARTIN, OVERLOOKING THE TINY GARDEN BEHIND THE TOWN HOUSE? HOW EVA LOVED THAT BALCONY! SHE USED TO STAND OUT THERE FOR HOURS...



REMEMBER THE MAD PLAN YOU'D GOTTEN? YOU'D THOUGHT IT OUT SO CAREFULLY. IT WOULD BE SO EASY TO WEAKEN THE SUPPORTS OF HER LITTLE BALCONY SOME TIME WHEN SHE WASN'T AT HOME...



YOU'D ENVISIONED HER STEPPING OUT ONTO THE LOOSENED BALCONY ONE NIGHT...



YOU'D EVEN SEEN IT IN YOUR MIND'S EYE SO CLEARLY...THE BOLT'S COMING LOOSE...THE SUDDEN SAGGING...

MARTIN! MARTIN! HELP!

THE COLLAPSING OF CONCRETE AND METAL...HER AGONIZED SHRIEK...

YAAAAEEEEEEEEEE

...AS SHE PLUNGED DOWNWARD TOWARD THE NEW SPIKE FENCE YOU'D HAVE CONVENIENTLY ERECTED...

AND YOU'D EVEN IMAGINED YOURSELF LOOKING DOWN AT THE TWITCHING IMPALED FIGURE... AND LAUGHING...

GOOD-BYE, EVA, HELLO, PARIS...LONDON...WINE... WOMEN... EH, EH, EH...

YOU'D PLANNED IT ALL SO CAREFULLY... EVEN UP TO WHAT YOU'D TELL THE POLICE...

IT...IT JUST **COLLAPSED!** IT WAS...SOB...**AWFUL... AWFUL!** I WAS SO **HELPLESS!** I...SOB...I COULDN'T STOP IT! I COULDN'T DO ANYTHING!

AND YOU'D PICTURED HOW SYMPATHETIC...THEY'D BE...HOW THEY'D PAT YOU ON THE BACK AND SAY...

SORRY, MR. SAUNDERS! IT'S BEEN AN **ORDEAL** FOR YOU, WE **KNOW!**

SORRY TO HAVE HAD TO ASK YOU ALL THESE PAINFUL **QUESTIONS!** A **TRAGIC LOSS...**

LOSS? YOU'D BE LAUGHING INSIDE AT WHAT YOU'D GAINED! YOU REMEMBER HOW YOU **KNEW** YOU'D HAVE TO BE CAREFUL... CONCEALING YOUR GLEE... AS THEY CARRIED HER MANGLED BODY OUT, PIERCED AND TORN BY THE FENCE SPIKES...

AFTER SHE'S BURIED...AND THE WILL IS PROBATED...I **REAP...NOT WEEP!**

REMEMBER ALL THAT, MARTIN? REMEMBER THE PLANNING...ORDERING THE SPIKE FENCE...ITS CAREFUL PLACEMENT? REMEMBER THAT MORNING, FIVE YEARS AGO, WHEN EVA WENT ON A SHOPPING TOUR AND YOU WERE FINALLY ABLE TO PUT YOUR PLANS INTO OPERATION?...

THERE! THESE WROUGHT IRON BRACES ARE READY TO COME LOOSE AT THE LEAST JARRING...

WHAT HAPPENED, MARTIN? WHAT HAPPENED FIVE YEARS AGO? EVA IS STILL WITH YOU. REVOLTING EVA. NIGHT AFTER NIGHT...

MARTIN!

HUH?

HER VOICE STARTLES YOU FROM YOUR REVERIE. SHE STANDS OVER YOU, GRINNING DOWN AT YOU WITH HER STAINED, TARNISHED, DECAYED TEETH, AND YOU SMELL HER FETID BREATH AS SHE WHISPERS...

IT'S TIME FOR BED, MARTIN!

NOT YET, EVA. PLEASE, NOT YET...

SHE IGNORES YOUR PLEAS. SHE TAKES YOUR HAND IN HERS...HER COLD SLIMY HAND. AND SHE LEADS YOU TO THE STAIRS. HER GRIP IS STRONG...SO STRONG...

SHE PULLS YOU UP THE DUST-LADEN STAIRS...UP INTO THE FOUL RANCID-SMELLING BEDROOM ABOVE...

LET ME READ A LITTLE WHILE, EVA. PLEASE! I'M NOT TIRED! REALLY!

DON'T BE STUBBORN, MARTIN! COME ALONG!

I NEVER USED TO HAVE TROUBLE WITH YOU, MARTIN. NOT LONG AGO!

PLEASE...EVA... SOB...

YOU SIT ON THE BED AND YOU HIDE YOUR HEAD IN YOUR HANDS. YOU CAN'T STAND THIS, CAN YOU, MARTIN? EVERY NIGHT, THE RITUAL. YOU CAN HEAR HER RUSTLING HER DRAB INFESTED CLOTHES...

YOU CAN HEAR THEM FALLING TO THE FLOOR, WHISPING UP A RANK CLOUD OF DUST. AND MUCH AS YOU TRY, YOU CANNOT HELP BUT LOOK. YOU CANNOT STOP YOURSELF FROM LOOKING AT YOUR WIFE'S BODY...

HAVE...PITY...EVA...

BUT, DARLING! WE'RE MARRIED! REMEMBER?

CHOKE...

THAT'S BETTER, DEAR...

YOU STARE AT HER BLOATED ROTTING FLESH THAT EVEN NOW FALLS AWAY IN TINY DRIED PARTICLES...

YOU STARE AT THE GAPING HOLES ACROSS HER BACK WHERE THE FENCE SPIKES CAME THROUGH...

OH, LORD, EVA! WON'T YOU LET ME GO?

I CAN'T, DARLING!

I'M SORRY, EVA! I'M SORRY! PLEASE! FOR GOD'S SAKE! GO BACK! GO BACK! PLEASE...

BUT THAT WOULD MEAN LEAVING YOU, MARTIN, DARLING! AND I CAN'T DO THAT!

AND YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN NEVER LEAVE HER, MARTIN SAUNDERS! YOU KNOW THAT IF YOU EVER TRIED, SHE WOULD FIND YOU. SHE...OR THE POLICE! BECAUSE, SHE'D GO TO THEM...AND SHOW THEM. SO YOU STARE AT THE WOMAN YOU MURDERED FIVE YEARS AGO... THE WOMAN WHO CAME BACK FROM HER GRAVE TO LIVE WITH YOU AGAIN...TO LIVE WITH YOU BECAUSE SHE'D TAKEN A VOW... A VOW SHE MEANT TO KEEP!...

TILL DEATH DO US PART, MARTIN! REMEMBER? WE BOTH PROMISED! THAT MEANS TILL BOTH OF US DIE! NOT JUST ONE! SO YOU SEE, I CAN'T LEAVE YOU! NOT YET! NOW...COME TO BED!

OH...LORD... CHOKES...

HEE, HEE! NOW THERE'S A GAL THAT BELIEVES IN LIVING UP TO HER PROMISE. OR DEADING UP TO IT, TO BE MORE ACCURATE. SHE'S KEEPING HER MARRIAGE VOW EVEN IF SHE'S NOT KEEPING VERY WELL, HERSELF! WELL, ENOUGH OF THIS ROT! THE VAULT-KEEPER AWAITS WITH HIS FIENDISH FABLE. I'LL BE BACK LATER WITH ANOTHER HORROR HELPING FROM MY CRUDDY CAULDRON. LET ME JUST LEAVE YOU WITH THIS ONE THOUGHT. THE MOTTO OF ALL GOOD LITTLE GHOULS: "NEVER PUT OFF TILL TOMORROW WHAT YOU CAN CHEW TODAY!" 'BYE, NOW!

ME JUST LEAVE YOU WITH THIS ONE THOUGHT. THE MOTTO OF ALL GOOD LITTLE GHOULS: "NEVER PUT OFF TILL TOMORROW WHAT YOU CAN CHEW TODAY!" 'BYE, NOW!

THE VAULT OF HORROR!

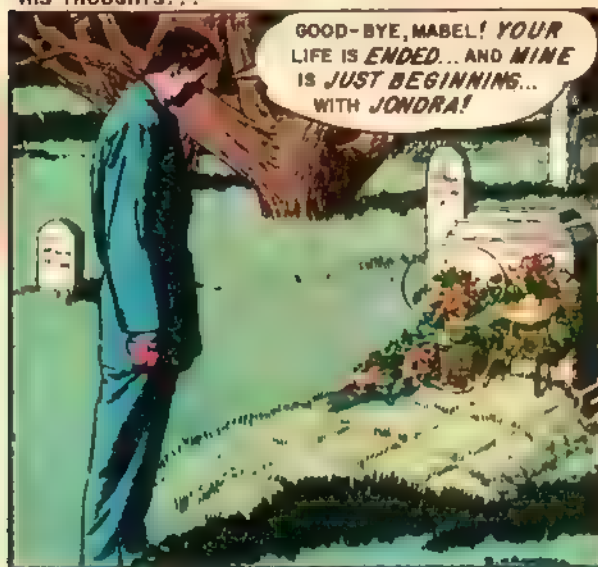
HEH, HEH! AND NOW THAT YOU'VE DINED, LET'S DANCE! WALTZ INTO THE VAULT, CREEPS... THE VAULT OF HORROR WHERE YOUR REVAULTING RAconteur... THE VAULT-KEEPER THAT'S ME WILL ELECTRIFY YOU WITH A HIGH-VAULTAGE YOWL YARN. AND IT WON'T BE MY VAULT IF IT DOESN'T CURL YOUR HAIR! THIS HUNK OF HORROR HEAVINGS IS CALLED...

The SHADOW KNOWS

WITH A SOFT THUD, THE LAST SHOVELFUL OF DIRT HAD BEEN FLUNG UPON THE FRESH MOUND AND PATTED DOWN, HIDING THE COFFIN AND ITS STIFF WHITE OCCUPANT FROM THE SUNLIGHT FOREVER. THE SMALL SILENT GROUP OF FRIENDS HAD TURNED AWAY AND LEFT. THE FUNERAL WAS OVER. ONLY A MEMORY REMAINED OF WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN A LIVING BREATHING HUMAN BEING. ERIC COOPER STOOD ALONE, STARING AT HIS WIFE'S GRAVE. HIS LONG SHADOW, THROWN BY THE SETTING SUN, WAS A GRAVEN IMAGE IN A PATHETIC POSE OF DEJECTION. HE WAS THE PERFECT PICTURE OF A GRIEF-STRIKEN HUSBAND IN A PAROXYSM OF DEEP MOURNING... EXCEPT FOR HIS THOUGHTS...



ERIC STOOD THERE, NOT MOURNING AT ALL. HE GLOATED, GLOATED OVER HIS MURDEROUS SECRET...



GOOD-BYE, MABEL! YOUR LIFE IS ENDED... AND MINE IS JUST BEGINNING... WITH JONDRA!



THEY THOUGHT IT WAS SUICIDE, MABEL! THEY ALL THINK THAT! AND NOW I CAN MARRY JONDRA.. RICH SWEET JONDRA AND IT WAS ALL SO EASY...

SWEET SOUNDS SEEMED TO FILL THE TWILIGHT AIR AROUND ERIC, ... LIKE THE TINKLING AND CLINKING OF COINS. THEY FORMED A BACKGROUND MUSIC AS HIS THOUGHTS RACED INTO THE PAST... A WEEK AGO... WHEN HE'D CHECKED INTO THE HOTEL IN DOVER ON HIS ROUTE AS A TRAVELING SALESMAN, AND HE'D DROPPED COINS INTO THE PAY PHONE IN THE LOBBY. . .

HELLO, BABY! GUESS WHO?

ERIC! DARLING! WHEN DID YOU GET IN? STAY THERE! I'LL BE RIGHT DOWN AND PICK YOU UP!



JONDRA'D BEEN MAD ABOUT ERIC EVER SINCE THEY'D FIRST MET AND HE'D TALKED GLIBLY TO HER... FEEDING HER HIS LINES... BREAKING DOWN HER RESISTANCE. ERIC HAD ENJOYED THE AFFAIR... PERHAPS MORE THAN THE OTHER GIRLS IN OTHER TOWNS. BUT HE'D NOT KNOWN HOW SERIOUS JONDRA WAS ABOUT HIM UNTIL THAT DAY A WEEK AGO WHEN SHE'D PICKED HIM UP IN HER CADILLAC CONVERTIBLE AND DRIVEN OUT TO A QUIET SPOT AND SAID. . .

ERIC! WHEN ARE YOU GOING TO ASK ME TO MARRY YOU?

HUH? I... UH... YOU MEAN... YOU MEAN YOU WOULD, JONDRA?



OF COURSE, DARLING! I LOVE YOU! THERE'S... THERE'S NO ONE ELSE, IS THERE? YOU SAID YOU'RE NOT MARRIED! I COULD MAKE US BOTH HAPPY, ERIC. AFTER ALL, I AM RATHER WELL OFF!

I... UH... WELL I NEVER DREAMED, JONDRA! LET ME... LET ME THINK IT OVER!



YES, HE'D TOLD JONDRA HE WASN'T MARRIED! BUT HE'D LIED! AND LATER THAT DAY, IN HIS HOTEL ROOM, ERIC HAD CURSED FATE. . .

ERIC'S HIGH-PRESSURE SALES TECHNIQUE HAD BEEN AS IRRESISTABLE TO HIMSELF AS TO OTHERS. HE QUICKLY SOLD HIMSELF ON THE IDEA. . .

A MILLION BUCKS THROWN AT ME AND I CAN'T GRAB IT! WHY DO I HAVE TO BE MARRIED? IF I WERE FREE OF MABEL, I COULD TAKE JONDRA AND HER DOUGH AND LIVE ON EASY STREET. IF I WERE... FREE..



I CAN'T LET A FORTUNE SLIP THROUGH MY FINGERS! IF MABEL WERE TO DIE... FROM... SAY... SUICIDE... WHILE I WAS ON THE ROAD... WHO'D PIN IT ON ME?

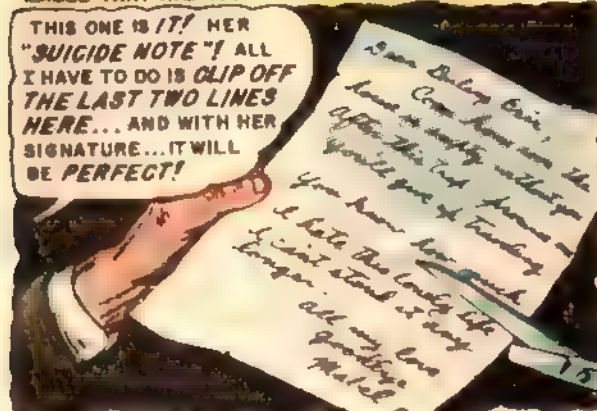


THE PLAN HAD SHAPED SWIFTLY AS HE'D SORTED THROUGH THE STEADY FAITHFUL LOVING LETTERS FROM MABEL THAT HAD FOLLOWED HIM EVERYWHERE...

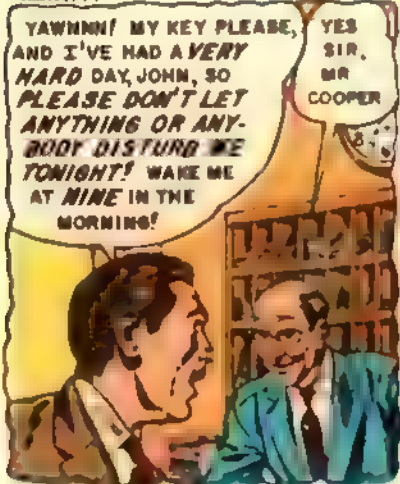
SO ERIC HAD SCISSORED OFF THE LOVING BEGINNING OF THE LETTER, AND THE REMAINDER HAD BECOME...

THIS ONE IS IT! HER "SUICIDE NOTE"! ALL I HAVE TO DO IS CLIP OFF THE LAST TWO LINES HERE... AND WITH HER SIGNATURE... IT WILL BE PERFECT!

...THE PINING OF A NEUROTIC LONELY WOMAN... FEELING SORRY FOR HERSELF... TAKING THE EASY WAY OUT! THE NEIGHBORS TOLD ME HOW UNHAPPY SHE IS WHEN I'M ON THE ROAD!



THE REST HAD BEEN RELATIVELY SIMPLE! FIRST, THE IRON CLAD ALIBI... IN THAT TOWN SO FAR AWAY...



LETTING HIMSELF INTO THE HOUSE... SILENTLY... USING HIS KEY.



STANDING HER ON THE STOOL AND SLIPPING HER NECK INTO THE NOOSE... KICKING THE STOOL AWAY...



THEN... THE CLIMB DOWN THE FIRE-ESCAPE OUTSIDE HIS WINDOW... INTO THE DESERTED ALLEY WHERE HE'D PARKED HIS CAR



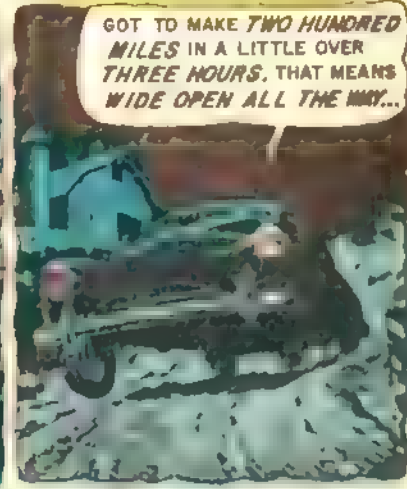
THE QUICK NERVE PUNCH THAT LEFT NO MARK... KNOCKING OUT HIS SLEEPING WIFE...



WATCHING HER COME TO IN THE LAST INSTANT BEFORE SHE'D STRANGLED TO DEATH... KICKING... STRUGGLING... HER BULGING EYES STARING.



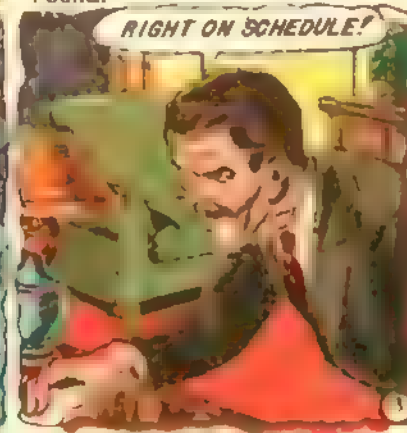
THE HIGH-SPEED DASH FROM DOVER TO HIS HOME TOWN... ALONG ROADS HE KNEW SO WELL... AVOIDING TRAFFIC... AND STATE TROOPERS...



THE HOME-MADE SCAFFOLD, THE KITCHEN STOOL... THE CRUDELY MADE HANGMAN'S KNOT TIED TO THE CELLAR BEAM... AND CARRYING HIS WIFE'S UNCONSCIOUS FORM DOWN...



AND FINALLY, BEFORE THE MAD DASH BACK... THE SUICIDE NOTE... PLACED CONVENIENTLY WHERE IT WOULD BE FOUND.



AND SO, AT NINE THAT MORNING, HE'D ANSWERED THE CLERK'S KNOCK...

HE'D ACTED SO WELL... AS HE'D OPENED THE MESSAGE...

HE'D LEFT DOVER IMMEDIATELY... THE GRIEF-STROCKEN HUSBAND. AT THE INQUEST, THE NEIGHBORS HAD ADDED THEIR EVIDENCE...

GOOD MORNING, MR. COOPER. THIS TELEGRAM CAME AT EIGHT. I DIDN'T WANT TO DISTURB YOU!

THANKS, JOHN! AND I NEEDED THAT SLEEP...

BEST SLEEP I'VE HAD IN MONTHS! I... OH, MY GOD!

WHAT IS IT, MR. COOPER? BAD NEWS?

POOR MR. COOPER! IT WASN'T HIS FAULT HE HAD TO EARN A LIVING ON THE ROAD. BUT SHE WAS ALWAYS SO DEPRESSED WHEN HE WAS GONE! NEVER SMILED OR ANYTHING! ALWAYS FEELIN' SORRY FOR HERSELF... BEIN' ALONE!

AND, TOGETHER WITH THE SUICIDE NOTE, THE CORONER'S JURY HAD BROUGHT IN THEIR VERDICT...

DEATH BY SUICIDE! THE BODY OF THE DECEASED TO BE TURNED OVER TO THE SURVIVING SPOUSE FOR BURIAL! CASE... CLOSED!

AND NOW THE TINKLING SOUND WAS THE TINKLING OF GOLD IN DISTANT DOVER... JONDRA'S GOLD... WAITING FOR HIM. ERIC COOPER'S THOUGHTS RETURNED TO THE PRESENT. HE TURNED AWAY FROM THE GRAVE, SMILING. IT WAS DARK NOW. THE MOON HAD RISEN, CASTING ITS COLD GLOW OVER THE GRAVEYARD...

SO NOW I'M FREE... FREE OF MABEL. FREE OF ANY SHADOW OF SUSPICION...

BUT ERIC WAS *WRONG*! FOR AS HE LEFT MABEL'S GRAVE, HE WASN'T FREE OF ANY SHADOW. THERE WAS HIS OWN. AND ONE OTHER...

SOMETHING BOTHERED ERIC AS HE CROSSED THE GRAVE-MOUNDS AND NEARED THE CEMETERY GATE. HE HAD A QUEER UNEASY FEELING... AS IF... AS IF...

SOMEBODY'S FOLLOWING ME! I CAN ALMOST TELL! I... I... GOOD LORD! WHAT'S THAT?

HE STOOD ROOTED TO THE SPOT, HIS SCALP CRAWLING.

TWO SHADOWS! AND ONE ONE IS THE SHADOW OF A WOMAN! IT LOOKS LIKE NO! IT CAN'T BE! SHE'S BURIED! SHE'S DEAD! SHE'S SIX FEET UNDER! IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! IT... NO! NO!

HE RAN, THEN, IN WILD DREAD. HE DARED NOT LOOK BEHIND. HE TOLD HIMSELF THAT THERE COULD BE NO EXTRA SHADOW RIPPLING AND DANCING ALONG WITH HIS OWN...



IT'S NERVES! THAT'S ALL IT IS! I'VE GOT TO GET HOME... HAVE A DRINK... CALM DOWN...

HE REACHED THE HOUSE...DASHED IN...SLAMMED THE DOOR. HE STOOD THERE IN THE DARKNESS, BREATHING HEAVILY. FINALLY, HE SWITCHED ON THE LIGHT AND POURED HIMSELF A GOOD STIFF DRINK. THEN...

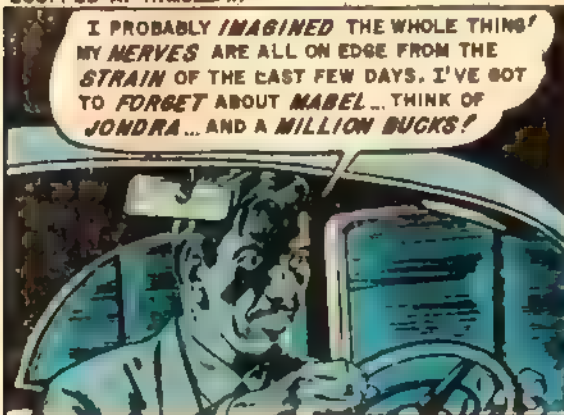


NO! OH... LORD! HER SHADOW AGAIN! IT'S MABEL'S... MABEL'S SHADOW... HAUNTING ME... HOUNDING ME FROM HER GRAVEY I'VE GOT TO GET AWAY FROM HERE...

HE STUMBLED OUT TO HIS CAR. BEHIND HIM, THE UNEARTHLY SHADOW PAUSED ON THE FRONT LAWN... HESITATING IN A POSE OF INFINITE SADNESS... AS IF POWERLESS TO LEAVE... AS IF SIGHING IN MEMORY OF A LOST LIFE AND LOVE...

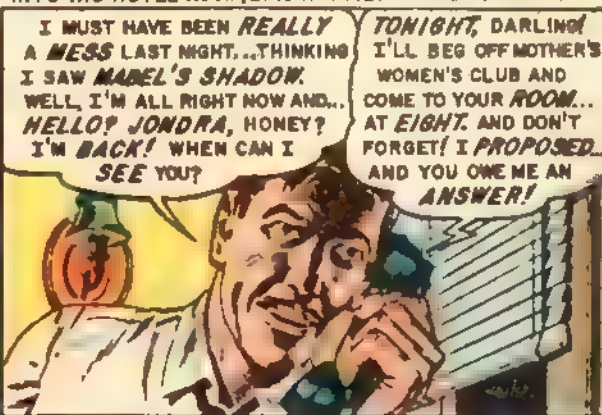


AS THE MILES REELED OFF, ERIC FELT BETTER. HE SCOFFED AT HIMSELF...



I PROBABLY IMAGINED THE WHOLE THING! MY NERVES ARE ALL ON EDGE FROM THE STRAIN OF THE LAST FEW DAYS. I'VE GOT TO FORGET ABOUT MABEL... THINK OF JONDRA... AND A MILLION BUCKS!

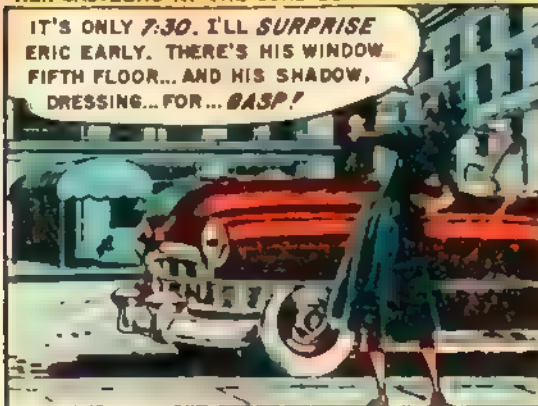
AT DOVER, THE NEXT MORNING, WITH SUNLIGHT STREAMING INTO HIS HOTEL ROOM, ERIC HAPPILY PHONED JONDRA...



I MUST HAVE BEEN REALLY A MESS LAST NIGHT... THINKING I SAW MABEL'S SHADOW. WELL, I'M ALL RIGHT NOW AND... HELLO? JONDRA, HONEY? I'M BACK! WHEN CAN I SEE YOU?

TONIGHT, DARLING! I'LL BEG OFF MOTHER'S WOMEN'S CLUB AND COME TO YOUR ROOM... AT EIGHT. AND DON'T FORGET! I PROPOSED... AND YOU OWE ME AN ANSWER!

BUT LIKE THE ANXIOUS LOVER, JONDRA WAS EARLY FOR HER DATE THAT NIGHT. AS SHE STEPPED FROM HER CADILLAC AT THE CURB BEFORE THE HOTEL...



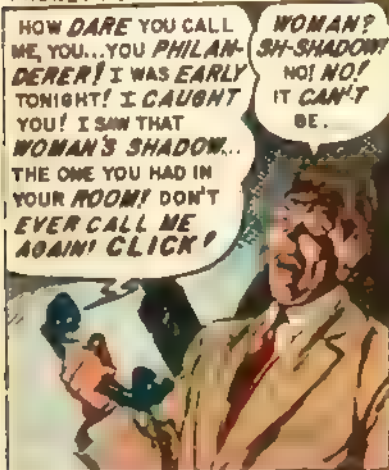
IT'S ONLY 7:30. I'LL SURPRISE ERIC EARLY. THERE'S HIS WINDOW FIFTH FLOOR... AND HIS SHADOW, DRESSING... FOR... GASP!

JONDRA FROZE IN JEALOUS SURPRISE AS SHE STUDIED THE SHADOW MOVING LITHELY OVER THE DRAWN SHADE OF ERIC'S ROOM...



WHY THAT'S NOT ERIC'S SHADOW! IT'S... IT'S A WOMAN'S! I... I'M EARLY AND... OH, THE DECEITFUL CHEAT! THE TWO-TIMING... SOB... SOB...

PUZZLED AS 8 O'CLOCK CAME AND WENT... THEN NINE... AND NO JONDRA, ERIC PHONED HER HOUSE AND SAT STUNNED BY THE FURIOUS VOICE THAT POURED FROM THE PHONE...



HOW DARE YOU CALL ME, YOU... YOU PHILANDERER! I WAS EARLY TONIGHT! I CAUGHT YOU! I SAW THAT WOMAN'S SHADOW... THE ONE YOU HAD IN YOUR ROOM! DON'T EVER CALL ME AGAIN! CLICK!

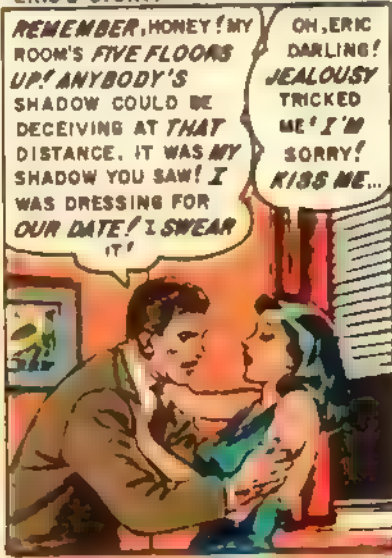
WOMAN? SH-SHADOW! NO! NO! IT CAN'T BE.

ERIC LOOKED AROUND... HELPLESS. THE SHADOW WAS THERE... MOCKING HIM. MABEL'S SHADOW



YOU! YOU'RE TRYING TO QUEER ME WITH JONDRA... MESS UP MY MARRIAGE PLANS... MY FUTURE! WELL, YOU WON'T SUCCEED, MABEL! I'LL PATCH THINGS UP!

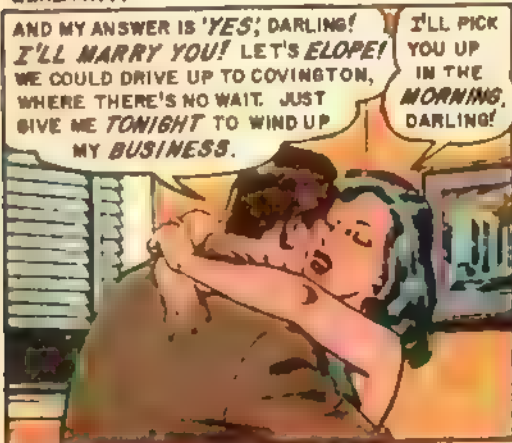
AND THE NEXT MORNING, WITH THE SHADOW GONE, JONDRA SWALLOWED ERIC'S STORY.



REMEMBER, HONEY! MY ROOM'S FIVE FLOORS UP! ANYBODY'S SHADOW COULD BE DECEIVING AT THAT DISTANCE. IT WAS MY SHADOW YOU SAW! I WAS DRESSING FOR OUR DATE! I SWEAR IT!

OH, ERIC DARLING! JEALOUSY TRICKED ME! I'M SORRY! KISS ME...

HE HELD HER CLOSE, FEELING HER WOMAN'S WARMTH... ONE MILLION BUCKS WORTH OF WARMTH...



AND MY ANSWER IS 'YES', DARLING! I'LL MARRY YOU! LET'S ELOPE! WE COULD DRIVE UP TO COVINGTON, WHERE THERE'S NO WAIT. JUST GIVE ME TONIGHT TO WIND UP MY BUSINESS.

I'LL PICK YOU UP IN THE MORNING, DARLING!

ERIC HAD BEEN CAREFUL TO PUSH OFF THE WEDDING TILL MORNING. HE SENSED THAT MABEL'S SHADOW SHUNNED DAYLIGHT. HE WANTED TO PLAY IT SAFE BUT JONDRA WAS A WOMAN AND A WOMAN IS A SUSPICIOUS CREATURE. SHE WAS CURIOUS ABOUT ERIC'S 'BUSINESS'. SO SHE PAID HIM A SURPRISE VISIT THAT EVENING...



ERIC, I... I... CHOKE!

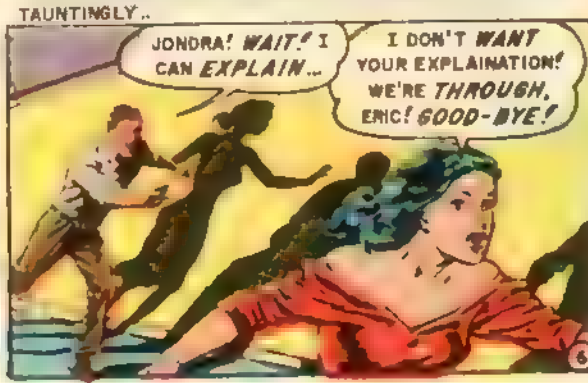
THIS TIME, THERE WAS NO MISTAKE, SHE'D GONE UP UNANNOUNCED... AND PUSHED OPEN HIS HOTEL ROOM DOOR. AND SHE'D SEEN THE TWO SHADOWS ON THE WALL... ERIC'S AND THE WOMAN'S... EMBRACING...

JONDRA FLEW FROM THE HOTEL ROOM, CRYING HYSTERICALLY. WHAT SHE'D SEEN ON THE HOTEL-ROOM WALL HAD BEEN PROOF ENOUGH FOR HER. ERIC HAD SEEN IT TOO HE HURRIED AFTER HER, MABEL'S SHADOW FOLLOWED, TAUNTINGLY...



HUH? JONDRA? THAT YOU? THIS IS A SURPRISE. I... I... CHOKED...

OH, ERIC! SOB



JONDRA! WAIT! I CAN EXPLAIN...

I DON'T WANT YOUR EXPLANATION! WE'RE THROUGH, ERIC! GOOD-BYE!

ERIC STAGGERED AFTER JONDRA'S ROARING CAR AS IT SPED INTO THE NIGHT. HE WANDERED, DAZED, UNABLE TO ELUDE THE SHADOW THAT CLUNG TO HIM. AS MABEL HAD ALWAYS CLUNG TO HIM.



JONDRA STOPPED HER CAR, SOBBING. SHE SHOOK HER HEAD. HAD HER EYES DECEIVED HER BACK THERE IN THE HOTEL ROOM? WERE TWO LAMPS LIT, CASTING ERIC'S OWN DOUBLE SHADOW ON THAT WALL? WAS THIS ALL SOME JEALOUS NIGHTMARE? SHE GOT OUT OF THE CAR, STARTED RUNNING BACK TOWARD THE HOTEL. SHE NEVER NOTICED THE WOMAN'S SHADOW RIPPLING ALONG AFTER HER OWN... ITS CLUTCHING HANDS EXTENDED.

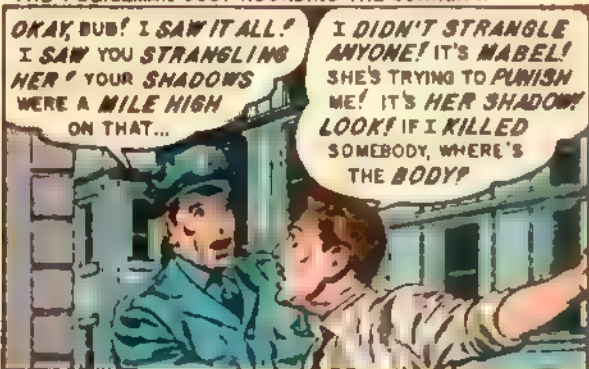


ERIC KNELT IN THE DESERTED STREET, TYING HIS LOOSENED SHOELACE. THE DISTANT STREETLAMP CAST HIS SHADOW HIGH UP ON THE WAREHOUSE WALL ACROSS THE CORNER. SUDDENLY AN EAR-SPLITTING SCREAM REVERBERATED THROUGH THE NIGHT.



AROUND THE CORNER, THE COP POUNDING HIS LONESOME BEAT LISTENED, HORRIFIED, AS THE SCREAM DIED AWAY INTO THE NIGHT IN A CHOKING GURGLE. HE STARED AT THE SHADOWS, MAGNIFIED LIKE VELVET BLACK GIANT PHANTOMS, ON THE WAREHOUSE WALL... THE SHADOW OF THE MAN BENDING OVER... AND THE SHADOW OF THE WOMAN AT HIS FEET, IN A DEATH STRUGGLE.

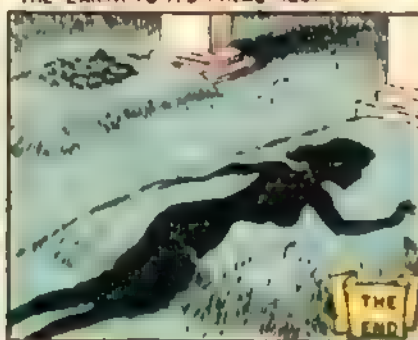
ERIC KNELT, FROZEN, LISTENING TO THE FADING SCREAM. AND THEN HE SAW THE SHADOWS ON THE BUILDING FACE... HIS AND MABEL'S. AND SUDDENLY HE BEGAN TO RUN... WILDLY... CONFUSED... FRIGHTENED... INTO THE ARMS OF THE POLICEMAN JUST ROUNDING THE CORNER..



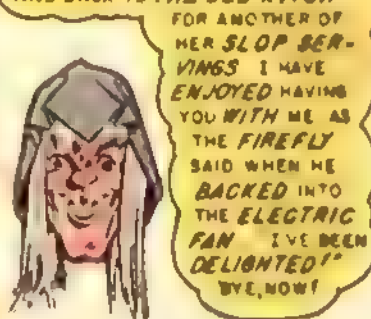
THE POLICEMAN NODDED TOWARD THE CRUMPLED FORM LYING UP THE BLOCK. THEY MOVED TOWARD IT SILENTLY.



THE TRIAL WAS SHORT. ERIC'S RIDICULOUS DEFENSE ABOUT MABEL'S SHADOW WAS TORN TO PIECES. HE WAS EXECUTED SOON AFTER AND BURIED IN THE GRAVE BESIDE MABEL'S. ONLY THEN DID A WOMAN'S SHADOW TURN AND WITH SILENT SATISFACTION, SLIP BACK INTO THE EARTH TO ITS FINAL REST.



HEH, HEH! AND THAT'S MY SHADY TALE FOR THIS ISSUE OF THE OLD HAG'S MAG, KIDDIES. SO NEXT TIME YOU GET THAT CREEPY FEELING... MAKE SURE YOU'RE NOT BEING SHADOWED! AND NOW, I'LL CAST YOU OUT OF THE VAULT AND BACK TO THE OLD WITCH.



HOT HEAD

With a crowbar, Tengard began to pry the freight door loose. Grunting aloud, he felt sweat skidding down the small of his back as his arms strained to crack the metal seal on the grimy railroad car. Slowly the steel lock began to creak . . . inch by inch it opened. Another thirty seconds . . . fifteen . . . five . . .

The rasping voice coming at him from down the tracks made Tengard whirl in surprise. Past the lines of freight cars jammed into the smoky yard he saw the bulky man lunging forward: something in the beefy face and the flat-footed wobble sent a spasm of fear trembling through Tengard.

"Watcha doin' with that lock, bum?" the rasping voice demanded as it shambled nearer. "Drop that lousy crowbar before I wrap it around your skull!"

The puffing face was close now, its beady eyes glowering out from under bushy brows. The beefy man began to snarl again, as his hand stabbed for his shoulder holster. Tengard gulped air, like a drowning man . . . then gripped the crowbar and slashed out violently.

The railroad detective went down with a scream of pain and a gush of dark red blood. Tengard's eyes popped wide and a nervous wheeze giggled from his trembling lips. He stepped forward and crashed downward with the dripping crowbar; the agonized wail stopped immediately. The enemy was dead.

Tengard heard excited voices and running feet. Glancing around wildly, he spotted an uncovered freight car. Dropping the crowbar, he fled down the tracks. Then, digging his fingers against the metal skin, he swung up the side of the car and dropped with a groan onto a jagged pile of coal.

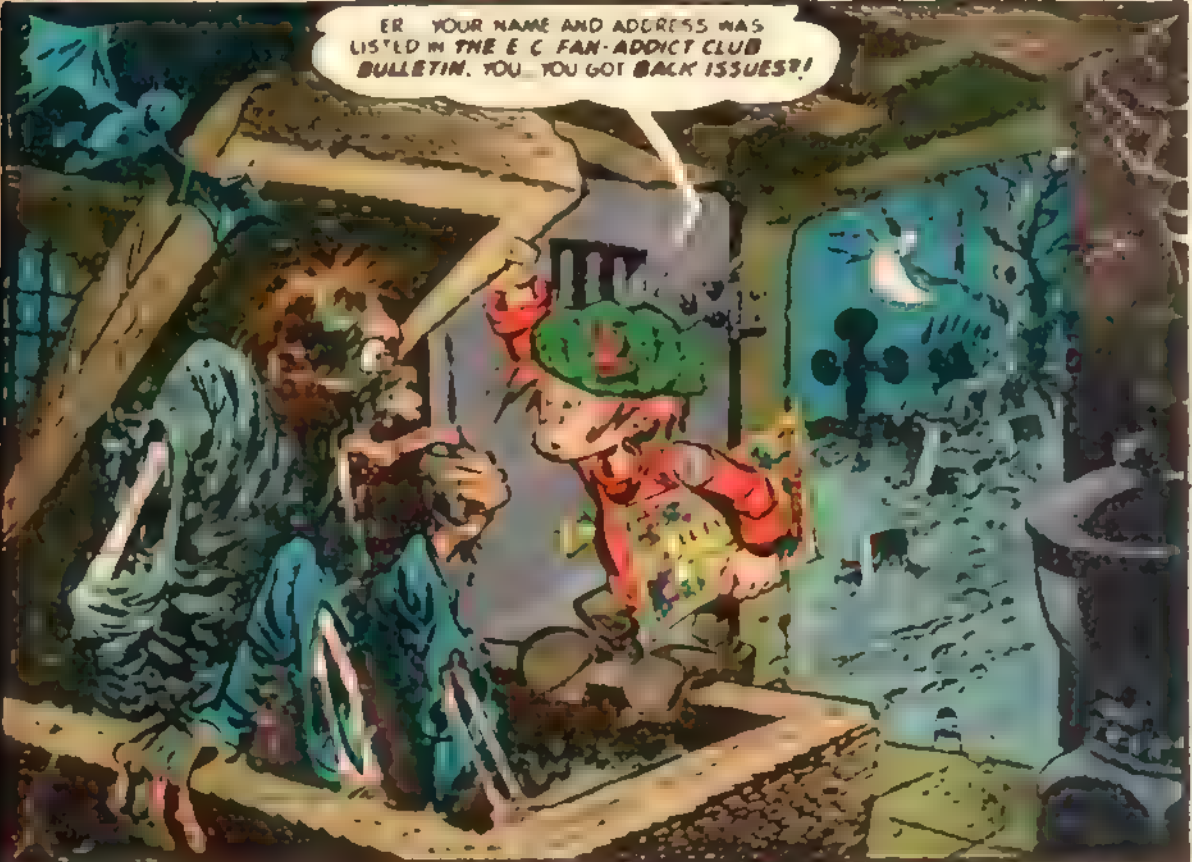
The steps were coming closer now; the voices echoed through the yard as they searched for the dead man. Tengard shook the frightened perspiration from his eyes, knotted his fists to stop the convulsive trembling of his body, and began to burrow like a frenzied animal. The knife edges tore at his flesh and shredded his clothing; the black dust swathed his eyes and clogged his gaping mouth. But the feet were pounding by now . . . Tengard crouched and held his breath. *He'd escaped!*

Suddenly, the train lurched forward, lumbering ponderously as if its wheels were square. Tengard started to claw his way out of the coal pile, when the train jarred to an unexpected stop. The coal began to shift furiously on the floor of the car, and his feet shot out from under him. With a roar, the coal began to crash out of the car, down through a rusty chute which had just opened. With a screech of terror, Tengard felt himself being sucked downwards . . . down the chute . . . down with the crashing avalanche.

It was hot . . . so searing hot that the breath was smashed from him. And bright . . . the explosion of color blinded him and he shrieked in pain. The skin began to flake off his writhing body like scales from a dead fish. His lungs puffed up until they seemed to be jamming up into the raw wound of his throat; he felt himself floating in a hideous vapor. And all around him was a thunderous roar . . . and a ghastly heat . . . a shimmering, agonizing, torturing heat . . .

All the railroad firemen found, when they cleaned the roundhouse furnace the next day, were a few puzzling slivers of charred bone.

NOW...IF YOU JOIN...YOU GET THE BULLETIN...FREE!



YES, FANS. YOU, TOO, CAN BE LUCKY LIKE MELVIN, HERE! YOU, TOO, CAN COMPLETE YOUR COLLECTION OF E.C.'S! YOU, TOO, CAN JOIN THE

E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB

AND RECEIVE YOUR MEMBERSHIP KIT (WHICH INCLUDES A FULL-COLOR 7½X10½ ILLUMINATED CERTIFICATE, A STURDY WALLET IDENTIFICATION CARD, A SNAZZY EMBROIDERED SHOULDER PATCH, AND A STUNNING ANTIQUE BRONZE-FINISH BAS-RELIEF PIN)... PLUS A FREE SUBSCRIPTION TO THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB BULLETIN!

FOR AN INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP, WHICH INCLUDES KIT AND FREE SUBSCRIPTION, FILL OUT THE COUPON AND SEND IT IN, TOGETHER WITH 50¢. IF FIVE OR MORE OF YOU WANT TO JOIN AS AN AUTHORIZED CHAPTER, ENCLOSE EACH MEMBER'S NAME AND ADDRESS ALONG WITH 50¢ FOR EACH NAME AND INDICATE THE NAME OF THE ELECTED CHAPTER PRESIDENT. WE WILL NOTIFY EACH PRESIDENT OF HIS CHAPTER NUMBER. EACH MEMBER, CHAPTER OR INDIVIDUAL, WILL RECEIVE HIS KIT DIRECTLY. PLUS EACH ISSUE OF THE BULLETIN AS IT COMES OFF THE PRESS.

THE E.C. FAN-ADDICT CLUB
ROOM 706
225 LAFAYETTE STREET
NEW YORK, 12, N.Y.

So here's my 50¢! So I could've joined for half the price a couple of months back! So now I get a bulletin subscription. So who says I want it. So I'm a sucker. So put me down and send me the stuff what the kids wearing and the bulletin I don't want but I'm paying for...

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____
STATE _____ ZONE NO _____

(SO WHO'S LIVING FROM THE BILL FOR THE BULLETINS, US?!)
(JUST WE HAD TO RAISE THE PRICE! SO FOR US!)

NO 15¢ MEMBERSHIP WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER JUNE 1, 1974

THE OLD WITCH'S NICHE

Hee, hee! I don't know how you do it, but you do it! Nominations for additions to E.C.'s Horror Hit Parade keep pouring in. These latest terror-tunes were suggested by Bob Ringenberger, Cheviot, Ohio; Eddie Erlav, Indianapolis, Ind.; Bill Allen, Honolulu, Hawaii; Nick Andrian, Newark, N. J.; Leoniece Baer, N. Y. C.; Fred Costello, Chicago, Ill.; Nauseating Nancy, Laurelton, N. Y.; Paul Anderson, Sioux Falls, S. D.; Joe Legere, Lynn, Mass.; and Paul Gamba, North Bergen, N. J.:

ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A SLIT-HEART
LIVER, COME BACK TO ME
OH, BLIND PAPA!
SANTA'S CRAZY
FROM THE SPINE CAME THE CREPB
WITH MY EYES LAYED OPEN I'M SCREAMING
MANY SLIMES
BREAK MY HAND (I'M A STRANGLER IN
PARADISE)
SEW MINE PAPA
WHIP THESE HANDS
SAY, SEE BLOOD!
GIVE ME FIVE MAGGOTS MORE
WHALING, WHALING, OVER THE BODY
MAIMED
OOZE THAT'S KNOCKING AT MY DOOR
WHEN THE BLOOD HITS YOUR EYE
FROM A PUTRID OLD GUY
(THAT'S A MURDER)
YOU SAW ME CHOKING ON AN APPLE
LI'L LIZA'S PAIN
I'M SLITTING THE TOP OFF OF EARL

And now for some PUTRID POETRY penned by
Artie Zeller of N.Y.C.:

It was just a little over two years ago
That I started reading the thing.
At that time I thought, of course,
It would just be a passing fling.
"I can throw it away," I said to myself,
"At any time I please!"
But time went on, and I found myself
Like a rat, attracted to cheese.
This fascination, I thought, is bound to wear out
How long can it keep me attracted?
But curiosity urged me on and on
To each story I reacted.

I was trapped like the rat attracted to cheese
Like the addict (when without it, in pain)
These volumes of gore are the things that please
You see, E.C. HAS DRIVEN ME SANE!

And this gem by Frank Dupré, also of N.Y.C.:

When I was one and twenty
I heard a wise man say,
"Go up and down the main drags.
"From the alleys keep away!"
But I was one and twenty
And stubborn as a mule.
Now I am two and twenty...
In the stomach of a ghoul!

Anne Lovett of Baltimore, Md. is responsible for
this:

She vamped her way through N. Y. State
She vamped from Maine to New Hampshire
And all the men used to dig her stuff
Till they found that she was a vampire.

Stanley Goldman of Kansas City, Mo. submits this
sonnet:

There once was a ghoul who lived in a bin
His favorite dish was dead human skin
He went out every night seeking some prey
So he wouldn't be hungry the very next day.
One night, as usual, he was out on the street,
Waiting for someone he could nibble and eat
When he saw a figure he thought he could rally,
He chased the poor soul into a one exit alley.
But when he looked at the face, he began to perspire
'Cause now he was trapped... by a thirsty vampire.

Arnold Zalesen and Allen Rosner of Detroit, Mich.
wind things up with:

Mary had a little lamb
She liked it, oh so well
She fed it a box of T.N.T
And blew it straight to... a lot of squishy, putrid
slimy pieces

Subscriptions: One buck for eight issues... manila
envelopes... *hip, hip!* Keep sending in nonsense like
the above... makes this column easy to write! Address
for stuff:

The Old Witch
Room 706, Dept. 26
225 Lafayette St.
N.Y.C. 12, N.Y.

HERE'S A SWITCH...A TERROR-
TALE OF A LOVE THAT WAS...

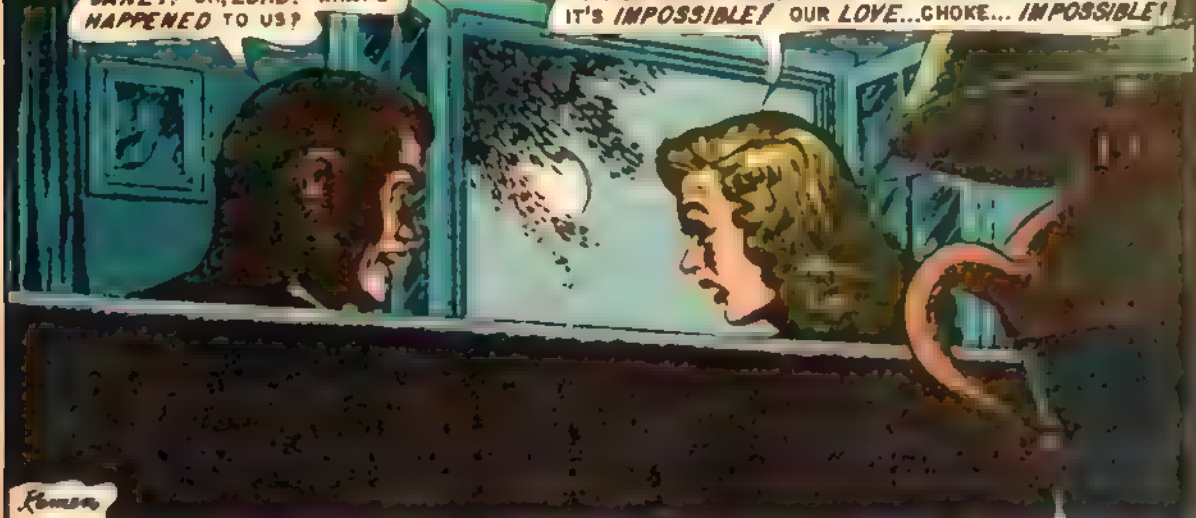
SPOILED



THEY'D BEEN MADLY IN LOVE, JANET GROVER AND LEON PAYNE. THEIR PASSION HAD BEEN WILD, BURNING, TEMPESTUOUS. THE SITUATION HAD BEEN PERFECT FOR THEIR TRYST, WITH JANET'S HUSBAND SO VERY FAR AWAY. YET, NOW, SITTING UPON THE SOFA BEFORE THE OPEN FRENCH DOORS WITH THE WIND OUTSIDE MURMURING THROUGH THE TREES AND THE SOFT MOONLIGHT FILTERING DOWN INTO THE SEMI-DARKENED ROOM, THE LOVERS STARE AT EACH OTHER IN GROWING CRAWLING HORROR. THEIR HEARTS FREEZE IN SUDDEN DREAD. THEIR STOMACHS HEAVE IN SUDDEN LOATHING...

JANET! OH, LORD! WHAT'S
HAPPENED TO US?

N-NO! DON'T TOUCH ME! OH, LEON! IT'S RUINED!
IT'S IMPOSSIBLE! OUR LOVE...CHOKED... IMPOSSIBLE!



JANET GROVER'S FACE IS A MASK OF REVULSION AS SHE
DRAWS AWAY, SHUDDERING, AVOIDING THE CARESSING
HANDS AND WORDS OF ENDEARMENT SHE'D SO EAGERLY
SOUGHT BEFORE...

HE... HE MUST HAVE FOUND OUT ABOUT
MY HUSBAND! HE MUST HAVE KNOWN! HE
DID THIS!



LEON PAYNE'S FACE IS TWISTED INTO AN EXPRES-
SION OF HELPLESS FURY. HE STARES IN DISGUST AT
THIS CREATURE BESIDE HIM...

WE...WE THOUGHT WE WERE SAFE! WE
THOUGHT WE WERE PUTTING SOMETHING
OVER ON ABEL. AND ALL THE TIME...
ALL THE TIME, HE...GAGG...



BITTER TEARS WELL UP IN JANET'S EYES...SPILLING DOWN HER CHEEKS. SHE SOBS QUIETLY OVER THIS INSURMOUNTABLE BARRIER THAT HAS BEEN BRUTALLY PLACED BETWEEN THEM... A BARRIER SO GREAT THAT NO LOVE, NO MATTER HOW STRONG, COULD EVER CLIMB IT. SHE SHAKES HER HEAD...

BUT WE WERE SO CAREFUL! SO CLEVER! WE WERE SURE HE WAS FOOLED! WHERE DID WE FAIL, LEON? WHERE?

I... I DON'T KNOW!



CURIOUS, KIDDIES? WONDERING WHAT ABEL GROVER COULD HAVE DONE SO EFFECTIVELY... SO DECISIVELY TO BRING TO THIS SUDDEN END JANET'S AND LEON'S PASSIONATE ATTRACTION FOR ONE ANOTHER? HEE, HEE! WELL, I'LL TELL YOU! BUT FIRST...LET'S GO BACK A FEW MONTHS. LET'S LOOK IN ON JANET AND ABEL GROVER IN THOSE 'GOOD OLD DAYS' BEFORE LEON



LET'S LOOK IN ON JANET'S PAST LIFE WITH ABEL GROVER... THE BRILLIANT SURGEON. OR RATHER, LET'S LOOK IN ON HER LIFE WITH-OUT HIM...

SORRY, DEAR! THAT WAS THE HOSPITAL! EMERGENCY APPENDECTOMY! I'VE GOT TO LEAVE!

OH, ABEL! THAT MEANS ANOTHER EVENING ALONE FOR ME. BEING A DOCTOR'S WIFE CAN BE SO LONELY!



WHY DON'T YOU GO OUT, DEAR? I'LL LEAVE YOU THE CAR! SEE A MOVIE OR SOMETHING.

I DON'T WANT TO SEE A MOVIE! I WANT TO BE WITH YOU!



SORRY, HON! NOTHING I CAN DO! YOU'LL JUST HAVE TO GET USED TO IT! GOOD-NIGHT! DON'T WAIT UP...

G'NIGHT.. YOU MEAN THING...



AND EVEN WHEN NO CALLS CAME FOR ABEL...EVEN WHEN HE WAS ABLE TO ENJOY ONE OF THOSE RARE EVENINGS OF FREEDOM AT HOME, JANET WOULD END UP IN A 'MEDICAL WIDOWHOOD'...

IF YOU WANT ME, I'LL BE IN MY LABORATORY, DEAR. CAN'T LET AN IDLE EVENING GO TO WASTE. GOT TO PUT IT TO GOOD USE WORKING ON THAT NEW ANESTHETIC OF MINE

YES, ABEL...



THUS, JANET HAD SPENT LONG LONELY EVENINGS IN HER BIG, EMPTY HOUSE... ALONE... NEGLECTED... IGNORED... GROWING MORE AND MORE DESPERATE, WHILE ABEL'D HURRIED OFF ON CALLS OR PUTTERED BELOW IN HIS CELLAR LABORATORY TILL ALL HOURS...

SOB.. SOB...



AND A DESPERATE WOMAN IS CAPABLE OF DOING DESPERATE THINGS...

FRONTAL LOBOTOMY TONIGHT! A FOUR HOUR PROPOSITION AT LEAST!

WELL... GOOD-NIGHT...

CAN YOU TAKE A CAB TONIGHT, DEAR? I'D LIKE THE CAR! I'D LIKE TO GO OUT!

OF COURSE, DEAR! THAT'S A WONDERFUL IDEA! WHY DON'T YOU VISIT ALICE OR YOUR MOTHER... OR TAKE IN THE SHOW AT THE BIJOU?

I'LL DO SOMETHING, ABEL! DON'T WORRY...

AND SO IT'D BEGUN. JANET HAD WANTED TO DO SOMETHING, ALL RIGHT SHE'D WANTED TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT A VOID THAT HAD COME INTO HER LIFE... A LONGING... A DESPERATION... A HUNGER THAT NEEDED TO BE SATISFIED...

YES, MA'AM!

A... A WHISKEY SOUR, PLEASE!

AND SHE'D FOUND A WAY TO FILL THAT EMPTY VOID IN HER LONELY LIFE. SHE'D FOUND IT THAT VERY FIRST NIGHT IN THAT LITTLE ROADSIDE SPOT OUTSIDE OF TOWN. SHE'D FOUND SOMEONE ELSE AS DESPERATE AS SHE. **LEON...**

SHE'S COLD... UNFEELING LACKING IN PASSION... AT LEAST AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, ANYWAY! SO NOW YOU KNOW!

WE'RE BOTH LOOKING FOR SOMETHING, AREN'T WE, LEON? THE SAME THING!

THEY WERE LIKE TWO LOST TRAVELERS IN A LOVELESS DARK FROZEN WORLD, CLINGING TO EACH OTHER FOR WARMTH...

OH, DARLING YOU'D BETTER GO! ABEL WILL BE HOME SOON!

I... I'M CRAZY FOR COMING HERE, JANET! THIS IS INSANE!

YES, INSANE! THE WHOLE MAD AFFAIR WAS INSANE. AND YET IT COULDN'T BE STOPPED. CAN YOU STOP AN AVALANCHE ONCE IT STARTS TO THUNDER WILDLY DOWN A MOUNTAIN SIDE? CAN YOU STOP A WATERFALL FROM POURING STEAMILY OVER A CLIFF?...

IT'S ALL RIGHT, MY SWEET! HE GOES DOWN THERE LIKE THIS FOR HOURS. I CAN ALWAYS TELL WHEN HE'S ABOUT TO COME UP. THE LIGHT GOES OFF IN THE LAB. YOU CAN SEE IT ON THE GARDEN WALL! COME OVER! IT'S PERFECTLY SAFE!

I... I DON'T LIKE IT! STILL... I DO WANT TO SEE YOU! I CAN'T SAY "NO!"

LEON? COME OVER! HE'S DOWN-STAIRS IN HIS LABORATORY! I'VE GOT TO SEE YOU!

YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR MIND, JANET!



AND SO, WHILE ABEL GROVER'D EXPLORED THE MYSTERIES OF MEDICAL SCIENCE IN HIS CELLAR LABORATORY...

IF IT WERE POSSIBLE TO 'FREEZE' THE BODY FUNCTIONS...SUSPEND THEM FOR A LONG PERIOD VIA SOME NEW ANESTHETIC... WHY, THE MOST DIFFICULT THE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE OF SURGICAL OPERATIONS COULD BE PERFORMED! AND THIS FORMULA MAY BE THE KEY...



... JANET AND LEON HAD EXPLORED THE SWEETER MYSTERIES OF HUMAN EMOTION...

OH, DARLING

SWEET.



THE LIGHT! IT'S GONE OFF! HURRY! THROUGH THE GARDEN...

'BYE, BABY...



IT'D BEEN SO EASY TO FOOL ABEL...UNGLANDULAR ABEL. HE WAS TOO UNROMANTIC... TOO LOGICAL... TOO UNEMOTIONAL TO SUSPECT JANET OF ANYTHING AS BASE AND AS PRIMITIVE AS HER HAVING A DESIRE TO BE LOVED...

ENJOY THE T.K. PROGRAMS TONIGHT, DEAR? HOPE YOU WEREN'T TOO LONELY!

NO, ABEL. I WASN'T TOO LONELY TONIGHT!



AND YET, NOW, ON THAT VERY SAME COUCH WHERE JANET AND LEON HAD SO OFTEN SAT AND WATCHED THE LABORATORY LIGHT CAST UPON THE GARDEN WALL, JANET'S PRIMITIVE DESIRE TO BE LOVED HAS SUDDENLY VANISHED. SHE LOOKS AT LEON'S FACE AND TURNS AWAY IN DISGUST...

DON'T TOUCH ME, LEON! DON'T EVEN COME NEAR ME. I COULDN'T BEAR IT!

OH, LORD! I'LL GO MAD! STARK RAVING MAD! WHEN DID HE FIND OUT?



WHEN DID ABEL GROVER FIND OUT? WELL, LET'S SEE! IT WAS ON ONE OF THOSE NIGHTS WHEN HE WAS WORKING IN HIS CELLAR LABORATORY AND BRAZEN JANET AND LEON WERE UPSTAIRS.. ON THE COUCH... IN EACH OTHERS ARMS... BUT ALWAYS CONSCIOUS OF THE LIGHT...

IT'S GETTING LATE!

HE'S STILL DOWN THERE!



IT WAS THE NIGHT ABEL HAD JUST COMPLETED A MODERN SURGICAL MIRACLE USING HIS NEWLY DEVELOPED ANESTHETIC. HE'D RUSHED UPSTAIRS TO TELL JANET THE GOOD NEWS. AND HE'D NEGLECTED TO TURN OFF HIS LAB LIGHT...

JANET WILL BE SO PROUD WHEN I... TELL HER EH?

OH, HOLD ME, LEON! HOLD ME CLOSE!

BABY!



DR ABEL GROVER'D STOOD IN THE SHADOWED DOORWAY TO THE TERRACE ROOM, AND HIS EAGER WORDS HAD CHOKED INTO A GAGGED SILENCE AS HE'D WATCHED THEM... HIS WIFE... HIS LOVING WIFE... AND THE OTHER MAN

NO! NO SOB
NO! IT CAN'T
BE! SHE
COULDN'T
DO THIS
TO ME!

I LOVE YOU, LEON!
I'M HEAD OVER
HEELS IN LOVE
WITH YOU



HE'D HUNG BACK, NOT REVEALING HIMSELF, LISTENING TO THEIR LOV-ERS' WORDS... THEIR HEAVY BREATH-ING, THE SOUNDS OF THEIR PASSION-ATE EMBRACE

AND I I THOUGHT DARLING
SHE LOVED ME!
CHOKE



HE'D STUMBLER BACK TO HIS BASE-MENT LAB, WHIMPERING AT THE SHARP SCALPEL OF SHOCKED DISILLUSION-MENT THAT RAZORED BRUTALLY AT HIS ACHING HEART WITH NO ANES-THETIC TO EASE THE JEALOUS PAIN.

WHAT CAN I DO? DIVORCE HER?
FREE HER? LEAVE HER? NO! NO!
THAT WOULD BE TOO EASY! I'VE
GOT TO HURT HER! HURT HER AS
SHE'S HURT ME! BUT HOW



A CALMNESS HAD COME OVER DR. GROVER THEN, AND A KIND OF PEACE. HE'D LOOKED AT THE RESULTS OF HIS LATEST MIRACULOUS SURGERY, PERFORMED ON LABORATORY ANIMALS WITH THE AID OF HIS NEW ANESTHETIC, AND HE'D KNOWN WHAT HE HAD TO DO

OF COURSE! EH, EH! HOW SIMPLE



AND SO HE WAS ABLE TO FACE JANET THE NEXT DAY WITH-OUT ANY SIGN OF EMOTION

GOT TO FLY DOWN TO THE MAYO
CLINIC CONCERNING MY NEW
ANESTHETIC, DARLING! WON'T BE
HOME TILL TUESDAY! SORRY
BUSINESS, YOU KNOW!

OF COURSE,
DEAR



HE'D SET HIS PLAN IN MOTION. NOW, ALL HE'D HAD TO DO WAS WAIT. WHEN JANET WENT OUT, HE'D RETURNED TO THE HOUSE AND HIDDEN IN HIS LABORATORY. HE'D HEARD THEM COME BACK, TOGETHER

YOU SURE,
HONEY?

PERFECTLY SURE! WE DON'T HAVE
TO WATCH FOR SILLY CELLAR LIGHTS
OR ANYTHING! HE'S FAR AWAY!
WE DON'T HAVE TO BE AFRAID, NOW!



AND AS THEY'D SAT ON THE COUCH, TASTING THE FIRST SWEET TANTALYZING MOMENTS OF THEIR TRYST... HE'D COME OUT OF HIS LABORATORY, TIP-TOED SILENTLY UP BEHIND THEM, AND

MY NEW ANESTHETIC
FAST SURE
EFFECTIVE

MMMMPH

MMMM



HE'D CARRIED THEM DOWN INTO THE LAB, ONE BY ONE, AND STRAPPED THEM TO OPERATING TABLES... SIDE BY SIDE...



FIRST ON ANIMALS
NOW ON HUMANS

HE'D GONE TO WORK, HIS EXPERIENCED HANDS, LIKE DELICATE MACHINES, HAD USED THE INSTRUMENTS OF HIS TRADE SKILLFULLY... CUTTING... SLICING... SEWING...



EM EM, EM

AND WHEN IT WAS DONE, HE'D KEPT THEM UNDER THE ANESTHETIC, FEEDING THEM INTRAVENOUSLY UNTIL THE HEALING PROCESS HAD BEEN COMPLETED



ANOTHER DAY AND
WE'LL BE READY

AND THEN HE'D CARRIED THEM UP AGAIN, ONE BY ONE, TO THE SELF-SAME COUCH WHERE HE'D FIRST SURPRISED THEM... AND HE'D LAUGHED

AND NOW... WHEN YOU COME TO... IT WILL BE AS THOUGH YOU WERE NEVER UNCONSCIOUS. YOU WON'T EVEN KNOW THAT A WEEK HAS PASSED...



AND THEN THEY OPENED THEIR EYES... AND SMILED AT EACH OTHER... AND STRETCHED AND YAWNED AND APOLOGIZED FOR FALLING ASLEEP. AND THEN THEY'D REACHED OUT... TO BE IN EACH OTHER'S ARMS... AND THEY'D SEEN...



JANET! MY GOD!

LEON! CHOK!

YES, THEY'D BEEN MADLY IN LOVE JANET GROVER AND LEON PAYNE BUT NOW THAT LOVE IS GONE. JANET STARES AT LEON IN LOATHING AND DISGUST... AT HIS HEAD SEWN SO NEATLY TO WHAT HAD ONCE BEEN HER OWN BODY. AND LEON STARES AT LOVELY JANET'S FACE, AND DOWN TO HER NECK WHERE HER HEAD MEETS THE BODY THAT HAD ONCE BEEN HIS. AND IS IT ANY WONDER THEY WHISPER

IT'S NO GOOD, LEON! IT'S RUINED!
NOW... HOW COULD I EVER WANT YOU?

I... KNOW, JANET
CHOK... KNOW!



HEE, HEE! NOW THERE'S A SWITCH, EH, CREEPS? THEY SURE LOST THEIR HEADS OVER EACH OTHER, THOSE TWO. AT LEAST DOC BROVER MADE SURE OF IT. WHERE'S DOCTOR GROVER THESE NIGHTS, YOU ASK? OH, HE'S AT LARGE! HE'S MAD, YOU KNOW! STARK RAVING! GOES AROUND PAINTING MOUSTACHES

ON LADIES' FACES
"SUBWAY POSTERS"
AS FOR JANET AND
LEON... WELL... WHO
KNOWS? AND
TALKING ABOUT
NOSE... I'LL
SIGN OFF LIKE
A FAMOUS BIG-
NOSED COMEDIAN.
"GOOD NIGHT, MISS
JORGANSEN...
WHICHEVER
YOU ARE!"



THE CRYPT OF TERROR

SALUTATIONS, SLOBS! IT'S FINAL SLOP-SLOT IN THIS ICKY-ISSUE OF THE OLD WITCH'S MISERY-MAGAZINE WITH LI'L OLD ME, THE CRYPT-KEEPER, WINDIN' IT UP. AFTER ALL THE DREARY DRESS YOU'VE DROOLED DOWN SO FAR, I'LL TRY TO LEAVE A GOOD TASTE IN YOUR MOUTH...GOOD AND GRUESOME, THAT IS! SO LET'S GO NORTH FOR THIS TALE OF TERROR I CALL...

COMES THE DAWN!!

OVERHEAD, ICE-BLUE STARS SPARKLED LIKE DIAMONDS IN THE ARCTIC SKY, GLEAMING DOWN OVER THE WHITE WASTELAND THAT STRETCHED AWAY FROM THE CABIN INTERMINABLY IN ALL DIRECTIONS. THE FRIGID NIGHT WIND BLEW RAW AND CHILL BUT IT COULD NOT DISCOURAGE THE HIDEOUS THING THAT YOWLED AND SNARLED AND TRIED TO CLAW ITS WAY INTO THE CABIN. ITS HUNGER, ITS THIRST STILL UNSATED, AS IT SLAYERED AND STROVE FEROCIOUSLY TO GET INTO THE SHACK, TO SEIZE JACK BOLTON, TO SINK ITS DROOLING FANGS INTO HIS WHITE THROAT, THE MAN WITHIN LAUGHED. HE LAUGHED AT THE FIENDISH INHUMAN MONSTER WHO HUNGRED FOR HIS BLOOD JUST A FEW INCHES OF WOOD AWAY.

HEH, HEH, HEH



YES, JACK BOLTON LAUGHED. IT WAS FUNNY, IN A GRUESOME WAY, TAUNTING A VAMPIRE. HE LAUGHED, TOO, AT THE TWO THINGS LYING OUT THERE IN THE COLD SNOW...THE TWO BLUE-WHITE, DRIED-OUT BODIES THAT HAD BEEN DRAINED OF THEIR VITAL FLUIDS...

HEH, HEH, HEH



JACK BOLTON PEERED THROUGH THE CHINK IN THE CABIN WALL GRINNING OUT AT THE SNARLING MONSTER AND THE FREEZING CORPSES OF HIS TWO EX PARTNERS BEYOND THEN HE TURNED AWAY AND UNFOLDED THE MAP.

NO THREE-WAY SPLIT, NOW! THE RICHEST URANIUM STRIKE IN ALASKA AND IT'S ALL MINE.



HE GLANCED BACK AT THE DROOLING UGLY FACE STARING IN AT HIM THROUGH THE CHINK.

THANKS TO YOU, MY FANGED FRIEND! IN A FEW HOURS, I'LL BE ABLE TO REACH THE PLANE FLY TO NOME AND STAKE MY CLAIM AND YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP ME! BECAUSE COMES THE DAWN YOU'LL BE GONE!



AS FOR SAM AND OLAF... WELL, I'LL TELL THE AUTHORITIES THE TRUTH... UP TO A POINT! HOW... POOR GUYS... THEY WERE KILLED BY... SO HELP ME... A VAMPIRE. I CAN SHOW THEM THE BLOOD-DRAINED BODIES... AND KALAK, OUR ESKIMO GUIDE, WILL BACK ME UP ABOUT THERE BEING A VAMPIRE!



EVEN THE SLOBBERING AND PANTING OF THE CREATURE OUTSIDE COULD NOT DISTURB THE ROSY GLOW JACK BOLTON FELT. YES, IT HAD ALL GONE EXACTLY AS HE'D PLANNED.

THE ONLY THING I WON'T TELL THE AUTHORITIES IS THAT I PURPOSELY FREED THE VAMPIRE... AND THAT OLAF AND SAM WERE LOCKED OUT OF THE CABIN WHEN IT CAME.



JACK LEANED BACK, ENJOYING THE DANCING FIRE, IGNORING THE SCRATCHING AND HOWLING SOUNDS BEYOND THE WINDOWLESS CABIN. HE THOUGHT ABOUT THAT MORNING... WHEN ALL THIS HAD BEGUN. THEY'D WINGED NORTH FROM NOME IN THEIR HIRED PLANE... ACROSS THE BLEAK ARCTIC SNOW-DESERTS...

LET'S TRY THE AREA AROUND THE CHANUK HILLS, SAM!

ANY SPECIAL REASON, OLAF?



SAM... OLAF... AND HIM! PARTNERS! THEY'D POOLED THEIR SLIM FUNDS AND FINANCED A GAMBLE... A PROSPECTING JAUNT BY AIR... OVER THE ROOF OF THE WORLD. OLAF GUNDERSEN'D HANDLED THE MAPS. HE'D ALWAYS HAD AN UNCANNY KNACK FOR SMELLING OUT PAY-DIRT...

I GOT A HUNCH ABOUT THE CHANUK HILLS, SAM!

OKAY, OLAF. WE'LL GIVE THEM A LISTEN.



SAM WAYNE'D HANDLED THE "CHATTER-BOX"... THE GEIGER COUNTER. YES, THESE WERE MODERN PROSPECTORS, USING MODERN TOOLS...

G'MON, BABY! SPEAK UP! START GLICKIN'! HEY, JACK... KEEP 'ER LOW! THIS GADGET WON'T WORK FROM TOO FAR UP!

RIGHT, SAM!



AND HE, JACK BOLTON, HAD FLOWN THE CRATE, AND IT WAS NO BREEZE TRYING TO KEEP A STEADY LOW ALTITUDE OVER THOSE WIND-SWEPT BARREN WASTES...

CHANUK HILLS... DEAD AHEAD!
HANG ON! IT'S GONNA BE A
ROUGH RIDE



JACK HAD SKIMMED AS LOW AS HE'D DARED OVER THE SNOW HILLS AND ICE PEAKS IN ORDER TO GIVE THE GEIGER COUNTER A CHANCE TO PICK UP ANY SIGNS OF RADIO-ACTIVITY. HE'D CROSSED AND CRISS-CROSSED THE VAST, PRACTICALLY UNEXPLORED MOUNTAIN RANGE FOR ALMOST AN HOUR, WHEN...

HEY! HEY, LISTEN! SHE'S
GOING WILD!

URANIUM BELOW!
JACK! CIRCLE
AROUND...



THEY'D CIRCLED THE RADIO-ACTIVE AREA, LISTENING TO THE FADING AND INCREASING CLICKS... FEELING OUT THE BOUNDER ES OF THE DEPOSIT

IT'S HUGE!
IT'S A
BONANZA!
WE'VE STRUCK
IT RICH!

NOT YET, OLD
BOY! WE CAN'T
LAND DOWN
THERE! TOO
ROUGH!

I SAW AN ESKIMO
VILLAGE BEFORE.
LET'S SEE IF WE CAN
LAND THERE AND
HIRE SOME DOG SLEDS
AND A GUIDE. THOSE
THREE 'SISTER PEAKS'
ARE A PERFECT
LANDMARK...



LADY LUCK HAD NOT ONLY SHELLED OUT THE JACKPOT, BUT SHE'D ALSO MADE EVERYTHING CONVENIENT FOR THEM. THE ESKIMO VILLAGE HAD NOT BEEN MANY MILES OFF AND A FROZEN LAKE HAD MADE A PERFECT LANDING PLACE

OKAY, KALAK! YOU GOT
YOURSELF A DEAL. YOU
GUIDE US TO THE THREE
PEAKS AND WE'LL PAY
YOUR PRICE!

I GET DOG SLEDS
READY! IT NOT LONG
TRIP. THREE... FOUR
HOURS!



WHEN THEY'D REACHED THE AREA, SAM'S GEIGER COUNTER HAD REALLY GONE WILD

LISTEN
TO IT!
LISTEN!

THERE'S MORE
GOLD IN
FISSION FORM
HERE THAN
KING MIDAS
EVER DREAMED
ABOUT...

SAM!
WHAT'S
THIS?



AND THEN THEY'D FOUND THE CRUDE WOODEN BOX FROZEN SOLID IN THE ICE...

IT... LOOKS
LIKE A
COFFIN!

A COFFIN!
WHAT IN
BLAZES WOULD
A COFFIN BE
DOING OUT
HERE?

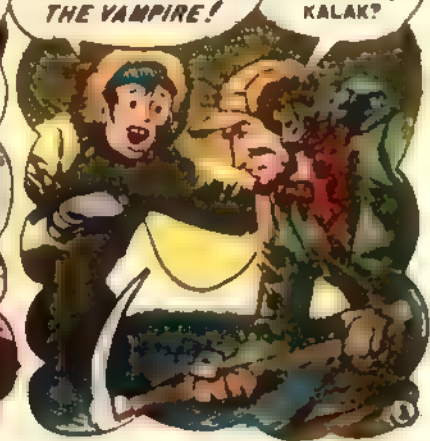
LOOKS
REAL
OLD!
LET'S
DIG
'ER
OUT
AND



...AND THEY'D HEARD KALAK'S SCREAM... AND SEEN THE LOOK IN HIS EYES

NO! STOP! LEAVE
IT BE! LEAVE IT
BE! DO NOT FREE
THE VAMPIRE!

VAMPIRE?
ARE YOU
KIDDING,
KALAK?



KALAK'S SPINE-TINGLING WORDS HAD HITTING FROM BLOOD-RED LIPS SET IN A FRIGHTENED FACE...

CHANUK VAMPIRE! EACH SPRING THAW IT COMES... WHEN COFFIN IS FREE. MANY OF MY PEOPLE DIE. WE THANKFUL WHEN FREEZE RETURN... AND VAMPIRE IS TRAPPED IN ICE ONCE MORE! WE LOOK FOR COFFIN BUT NEVER FIND! PLEASE... LEAVE IT...

WELL, LOOK, KALAK! WE CAN RID YOUR VILLAGE OF THIS THING ONCE AND FOR ALL!

SURE! ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS DRIVE A STAKE...

NO! NO! MUSH!

KALAK HAD LOOKED AT THE DARK-ENING SKY AND MUSHED OFF SCREAMING

HEY!

COME BACK, YOU IDIOT!

BLAST HIM! WE'LL NEVER FIND OUR WAY BACK TO THE VILLAGE IN THE DARK!

BUT FATE HAD ONCE MORE BEEN KIND TO THEM, FOR, A FEW HUNDRED YARDS OFF, THEY'D FOUND THE OLD ABANDONED TRAPPER'S CABIN

LOOK!

WHAT LUCK!

WE CAN STAY THERE TILL MORNING!

IT'D BEEN A CHEERLESS WINDOWLESS ONE-ROOMED AFFAIR, OLD AND DILAPIDATED AND DRAFTY, BUT THERE'D BEEN A FIRE-PLACE INSIDE AND SOME WOOD, AND THEY'D GOTTEN A FIRE STARTED

TOMORROW MORNING, WE'LL GO BACK TO THE VILLAGE, FLY TO HOME, AND STAKE OUR CLAIM.

A THREE-WAY SPLIT OF THIS FIND WILL PUT US ALL IN CLOVER!

WHAT ABOUT THAT VAMPIRE? WE'LL HAVE TO GET RID OF IT IF WE WANT THE ESKIMOS TO HELP US MOKY THE CLAIM!

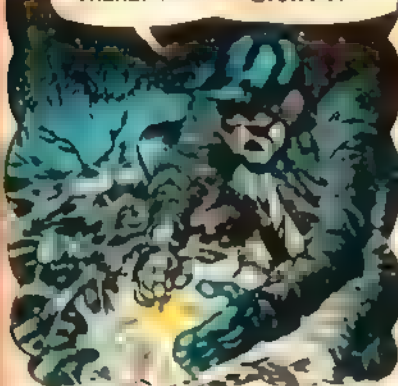
BUT JACK HAD GOTTEN OTHER IDEAS ABOUT THE VAMPIRE LYING IN ITS ICE-BOUND COFFIN OUT IN THE BATHERING DUSK

THREE-WAY SPLIT, HUH? WHAT ABOUT A ONE-WAY SPLIT... ALL MINE! I COULD PUT THAT BLOOD-SUCKER OUT THERE TO GOOD USE. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS WAIT FOR SAM AND OLAF TO FALL ASLEEP...

AND SO, HOURS LATER, WITH NIGHT BLANKETING THAT NORTHERN ICE WORLD, JACK HAD GATHERED ARMFULS OF FIREWOOD FROM THE SUPPLY IN THE OLD CABIN AND STEALTHILY CREEPT INTO THE NIGHT... BOTH OF 'EM ARE SOUND ASLEEP NOW'S MY CHANCE...

HE'D CARRIED THE WOOD TO THE SPOT WHERE THE ANCIENT COFFIN LAY FROZEN IN ITS ICE-GRAVE. SOON HE'D BROUGHT OUT ENOUGH TO COMPLETE A CIRCLE AROUND THE EERIE CONTAINER WITH ITS TRAPPED OCCUPANT...

THERE! NOW... TO LIGHT IT!



THE DRY LOGS HAD ROARED UP INTO A HUNGRY FIRE THAT CAST ITS HEAT ONTO THE ICE...MELTING IT SLOWLY...FREEING THE COFFIN...

I'D BETTER START BACK...



NEAR THE CABIN BOLTON'D PAUSED AND LOOKED BACK, WANTING TO BE SURE. HE'D SEEN THE LAST BIT OF ICE PUDDLE AWAY...HEARD THE SHARP OMINOUS CREAK ECHO THROUGH THE CRISP COLD NIGHT AIR...

THE LID! IT'S OPENING!
IT...CHOKES...



AND THEN HE'D SEEN THE ANCIENT TERROR OF THIS NORTHLAND IN ALL ITS MALEVOLENCE RISE UP, RAPIDLY TO SATISFY ITS FOUL LUST SO LONG DENIED FULFILLMENT BY ITS ICY PRISON...

GOOD LORD! I... I'VE GOT TO HURRY...



HE'D RUN, STUMBLING OVER THE REMAINING DISTANCE TO THE CABIN, SCREAMING

OLAF! SAM! OH, LORD!
OLAF! SAM!



THEY'D COME FROM THE CABIN. SLEEPY-EYED SHOOKED FROM THEIR PEACEFUL SLUMBER BY JACK'S SCREAMS.

WHAT'S GOIN' ON?

WHAT'S WRONG, JACK?



AND, JUST AS HE'D PLANNED, WHILE OLAF AND SAM HAD STARED AT THE HORRIBLE THING NOW COMING TOWARDS THEM, JACK HAD SLIPPED INTO THE CABIN AND SLID THE BOLT SHUT

IT'S... IT'S THE VAMPIRE!

JACK! JACK, OPEN THE DOOR! FOR GOD'S SAKE! JACK...



BOLTON'D HEARD IT ALL. THOSE BLOOD-CURLING SOUNDS WOULD BE FOREVER INGRAINED IN HIS MEMORY. FIRST, THE FEVERISH HAMMERS ON THE CABIN DOOR. THE HYSTERICAL PLEADING

JACK! PLEASE!
JACK!

NO! NO! KEEP
AWAY!

THEN SAM'S HORRIBLE SHRIER OF PAIN AS THE VILE THING LEAPED UPON HIM SINKING ITS RAZOR SHARP FANGS INTO HIS NECK. AND OLAF'S CHILDISH WHIMPERING

YAAAAEEEEEGGGHHHHH...

JACK...
SOS...
SOS
JACK!

THE SICKENING SUCKING SOUNDS AS THE THING FEASTED UPON SAM'S LIFE-FLUID. THE CHOKING SIGH AS OLAF'D RETCHED AND FAINTED

BOLTON'D TRIED TO STUFF THE WALL CHINKS...TO STOP THE ECHOES OF DEATH FROM REACHING HIS EARS. BUT STILL THEY'D COME: SAM'S LAST SIBBLING MOAN. OLAF'S GRUNT AS HE'D COME TO. HIS SCREAM AS THE VAMPIRE'D TURNED UPON HIM...

YAAAAAHHHHHHHHH

THEN THE SILENCE... THE AWFUL SILENCE... AND THE QUIET HEAVY BREATHING OF THE THING OUTSIDE. JACK HAD FINALLY GATHERED ENOUGH NERVE TO PEEK THROUGH ONE OF THE CHINKS BETWEEN THE LOGS. AND HE'D SEEN HIS EX-PARTNERS' BODIES LYING STILL AND WHITE IN THE SNOW

CHOKE...

HE'D WATCHED IN HORROR AS THE THING HAD TURNED, SENSING THE FURTHER PRESENCE OF BLOOD. ITS PERIOD OF ENTRAPMENT HAD BEEN LONG...ITS HUNGER GREAT. ITS TWO VICTIMS HAD ONLY PARTIALLY SATISFIED ITS HUNGER. IT'D STARTED TOWARD THE CABIN DOORING

BOLTON'D LISTENED, SHIVERING, AS THE FANGED MEMBER OF THE LIVING DEAD HAD CLAWED AND SCRATCHED AND SCREAMED IN FRUSTRATION AT THE WEATHERBEATEN LOGS... THE STONE BARRED DOOR. FINALLY, JACK'D LAUGHED... A NERVOUS MELLOW FRIGHTENED LAUGH

HEH. HEH. HEH

AND SOON, HIS LAUGH HAD BECOME A TAUNTING LAUGH AS THE HOURS PASSED AND THE NIGHT GREW OLD...

FOR THIS WAS EXACTLY AS JACK HAD PLANNED IT. HE...SAFE AND SOUND IN THE SNUG LITTLE CABIN...AND THE VAMPIRE OUTSIDE...SCRATCHING, CLAWING, FEVERISHLY TRYING TO GET IN BEFORE DAWN STREAKED THE EASTERN SKY WITH ITS COLD LIGHT...

ONE WAY OR THE OTHER, I GET RID OF IT. EITHER IT GETS BACK INTO ITS COFFIN BEFORE DAWN AND I GET IT WITH A STAKE...



...OR IT FALLS TO DUST AS SOON AS THE FIRST RAYS OF LIGHT HIT IT! ONE WAY OR OTHER, I WIN!



JACK LEANED BACK, IGNORING THE SCRATCHING AND HOWLING SOUNDS BEYOND THE WALLS OF THE WINDOWLESS CABIN. ENJOYING THE FADING FIRE. HE GLANCED AT HIS WATCH... HIS REVERIE ENDED...

SAY! IT'S ALMOST SIX A.M.! AND THAT THING'S STILL OUT THERE!



BOLTON COULDN'T UNDERSTAND IT. THE SUN WOULD BE COMING UP ANY MINUTE. YET THE VAMPIRE'D MADE NO MOVE TO RETURN TO ITS COFFIN. WAS IT GOING TO LET DAWN, ITS SLAYER, TRAP IT AND DESTROY IT? A FADED YELLOW SHEET OF PAPERS PINNED TO THE WALL CAUGHT JACK'S EYE...

HMMM. THIS CALNDAR'S A FEW YEARS OLD, BUT IT'LL GIVE ME AN IDEA OF JUST WHEN THE SUN RISES AROUND THESE PARTS THIS TIME OF...OF...

OH, LORD! I FORGOT! I FORGOT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING...



BOLTON SCAMPERED ABOUT WILDLY...PEERING INTO THE EMPTY DUSTY CUPBOARDS, THE BARE DRAWERS...THE BARREN STORAGE COMPARTMENTS OF THE LONG-AGO OCCUPIED CABIN. AND HE SCREAMED AT NOBODY IN PARTICULAR...

IF I STAY HERE, I'LL STARVE TO DEATH! THERE ISN'T A DROP OF FOOD IN THE PLACE! AND I CAN'T MAKE IT BACK TO THE ESKIMO VILLAGE! THE VAMPIRE'S OUT THERE...WAITING FOR ME! WHAT CHOICE HAVE I GOT? THAT THING'S GOING TO KEEP WAITING...WAITING...BECAUSE...



BOLTON LOOKED AGAIN AT THE FADED YELLOW CALENDAR. HE STARED AT THE GLEAMING EYES BURNING IN AT HIM THROUGH THE WALL CHINK. HE WHIMPERED SOFTLY...

...BECAUSE DAWN UP HERE AT THIS LATITUDE...THIS TIME OF YEAR...DOESN'T COME FOR...ANOTHER...SOB...WEEK!



HEH, HEH! WELL, KIDDIES...THAT'S MY COOL TALE FOR THIS ISSUE OF THE OLD MAG'S MAG. WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE IF YOU WERE IN JACK BOLTON'S PLACE? STAY AND STARVE...OR GO OUT AND FEED A STARVING VAMPIRE? THINK ABOUT IT FOR A FEW MINUTES. FINISHED? FEEL SICK? WELL, YOU CAN HEAVE IF YOU WANT! IT'S TIME TO CLOSE THE CRYPT ANYWAY. IN FACT IT'S TIME TO CLOSE D.W.'S PUTRID PERIODICAL. WE'LL ALL SEE YOU NEXT IN MY MAG, TALES FROM THE CRYPT. IN THE MEANWHILE, A BIT OF ADVICE. IF YOU HAVEN'T JOINED THE E.O. FAN-ADDICT CLUB...WELL...BYE!



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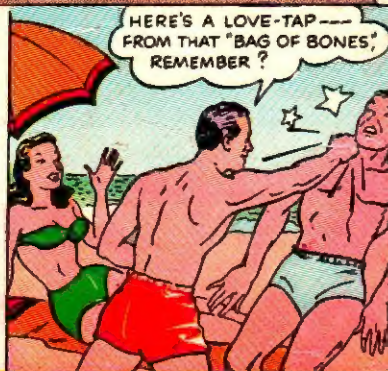
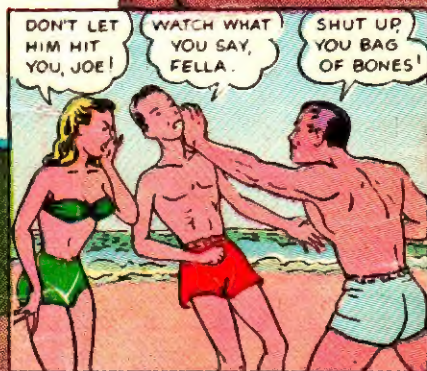
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